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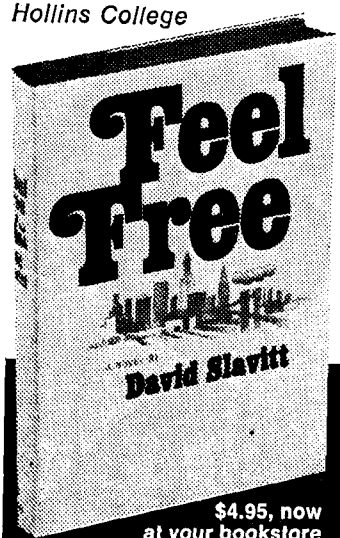

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NOTES

The last volume (number five) of **DORIS LESSING's** Children of Violence will be called **The Four-Gated City**. Knopf will bring it out next spring. . . . **PETER CAWS** was in Paris last spring reading structuralism for a book he's doing for Chicago. . . . **LEO WHALEN** is the pen name of a member of the (expanded) Mobilization Steering Committee the week of the Democratic Convention. . . . A Rumanian sociologist and art critic, **HORIA BRATU** made his first trip to Western Europe last spring. . . . **PETER BROOKS** spent last year in Paris. Mr. Brooks teaches at Yale; Princeton is publishing his book, **The Novel of Worldliness**, this spring. . . . **STEPHEN DONADIO** teaches at Columbia. . . . **A. D. HOPE** has just retired from the English Department of the Australian National University at Canberra. Viking brought out his fourth book of poems, **Collected Poems**, in 1966. . . . **HAROLD BLOOM** teaches English at Yale. He is currently on leave and is writing a book on modern English and American poetry. . . . **ROBERT GARIS** is working on a book on Ibsen. . . . **IRWIN WEIL** teaches Russian and Russian litera-

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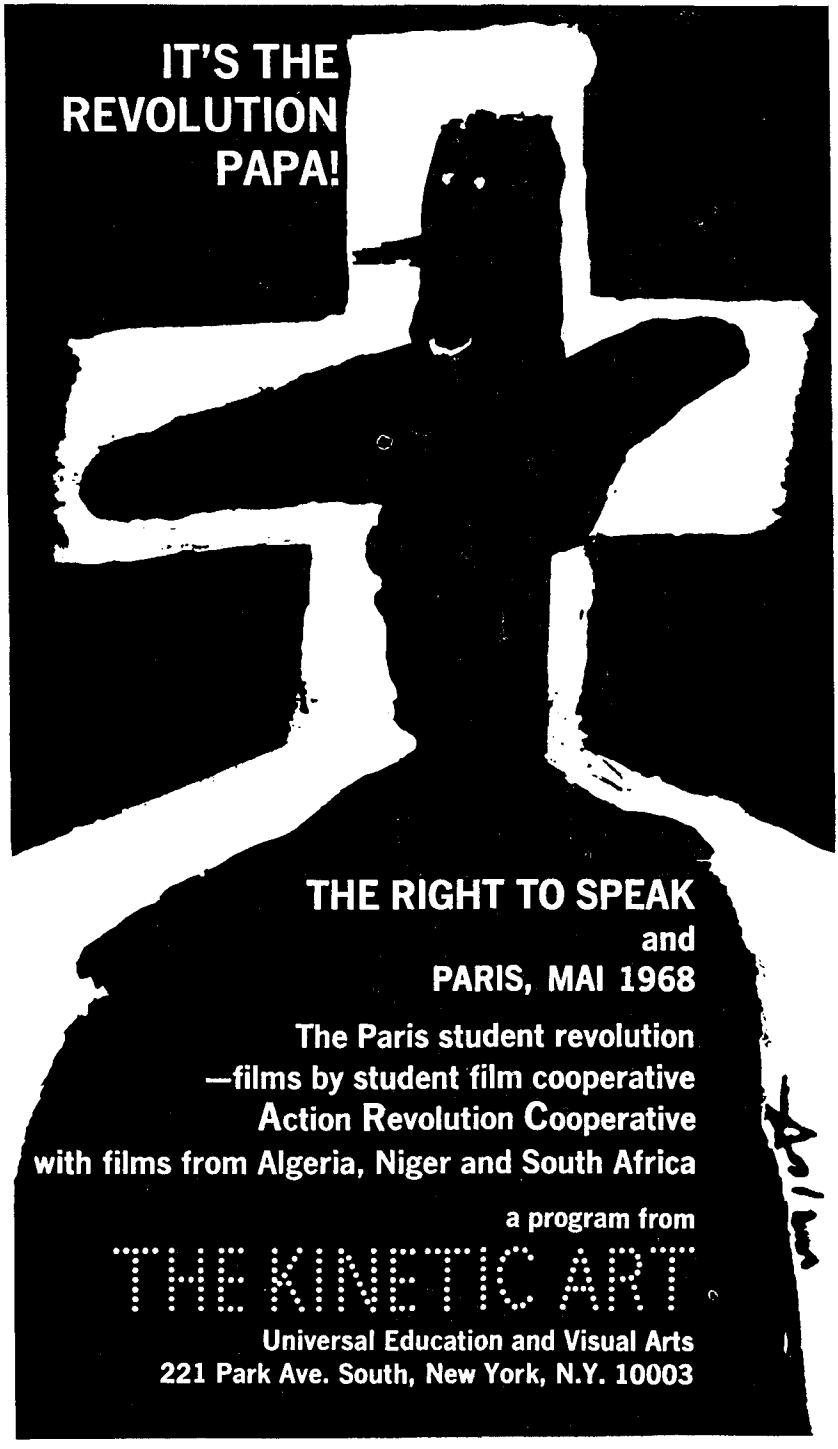

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Doris Lessing

SIDE BENEFITS OF AN HONOURABLE PROFESSION

Or rather, perhaps, a condition of, the mud which nurtures? Flowers, of course — but that isn't the point. No, definitely not an effluent, a by-product. Accurate as well as charitable to see it all as a kind of compost, the rich mad muck which feeds those disciplined performances, exactly the same night after night that we see and marvel at and which might even cause us to exclaim — if we haven't entirely lost that naivety which I for one maintain the theatre needs as dreams need sleep, and could not exist without for one moment: How *can* he/she bear to be someone else so entirely and devotedly every blessed night and two afternoons a week for hours at a stretch! Even with intervals for orange juice or Scotch. Possibly for months at a time. If the play finds favour, as they say.

Those two, for instance: household names, or at least in those households (one per cent of the population) which prefer to give room to these rather than to the more vigorous performers, football players, or horses or dogs — those two, having rehearsed for a month a play which called for a slow progress towards a bed, made of the bed itself a stage for — not at all for the guilt-ridden and eventually murderous lusts which the play incorporated, but for innocence.

It was an innocence so immaculate that words like mud and compost perhaps need looking at again. If, that is, we do not want to examine innocence.

It so happened — and no chance either, I feel, that both he (we'll call him John) and she (Mary will do) were involved during the period of rehearsal with some pretty savage moments in their private lives. He was in trouble with his marriage; and she, having been divorced, had reached that point with a possible new husband

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when she must decide whether to marry him or not. On the whole she felt not. At any rate, it was not at all that either could look forward, after a day of rehearsing passions not their own to loving tranquillity. Far from it, and on the contrary, both returned to scenes, reproaches and torments not very different — and they even said so, with that appropriate good trouper's laugh used by actors to dismiss their private lives when engaged on their real business — to those they were developing during rehearsals. Well, one night Mary *found* herself when everybody had left the darkened theatre, back stage and by the great bed which was such a feature of the play. It was made up, but for economy's sake not more than was essential. She sat by the bed on the little stool which was also part of the set and found herself shedding a tear though for what she could not have said — her words when describing the experience. Through blurred vision she saw a figure approaching from the dressing rooms: no ghost or burglar, but the handsome John, whose feet, or at least, some impulse, had brought him here, also in the belief that the building was deserted. No need, she said, for words. He sat on the companion stool on the other side of the bed. He offered her a cigarette. Between them stretched the crumpled sheet on which they had spent at least four hours that day of steady, grindingly repetitive rehearsal locked in each other's arms, apparently in the extremes of passion. They left half an hour later, without even the casual theatre kiss that by custom they would have offered each other on parting. Next evening, and without arranging it, they met again. For a week these two rolled, morning and afternoon and some evenings, in torments of simulated lust and its associated emotions, and at night met, chaste and tender, for a half hour before returning to their tumultuous private lives. They were too shy, as she explained, to touch each other. As in a first love, the lighting of a cigarette, the accidental meeting of a hand, were exquisitely painful — indeed, more than enough. That nightly half hour was filled with restoring breaths of air from lost horizons. Finally their *affaire* (so she always pronounced it) culminated in a kiss so delicate, so exquisite, that its poetry was enough to decide her not to marry her possible husband, and him to leave his wife. No, that kiss was not on the *first night*, but after the dress rehearsal. The first night being successfully accomplished in the usual ritual crescendo of shared tension, flowers, champagne, congratulations and the theatre emptying backstage into

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darkness as it had an hour ago in front, the two *found themselves* on their way out, by the bed, a slight detour and a temporary shedding of their first-night parties being necessary. Looking at the pillow case, which should have been fresh for the just-completed performance, she noted a smear of lipstick — hers, from the dress rehearsal. "Really," she said, irritably, "I do think they might have remembered to put on a clean pillow case for the first night." "I quite agree," he said, cool, and with precisely the same degree of professional irritation at incompetence, "that lipstick must have been visible from half way up the stalls." With which they kissed each other, comradely and brisk, as is customary, said goodnight, and parted, she to reaffirm to her lover that no, she would not marry him, and he to disagree with his wife who was saying that really, as responsible and adult people they should try again.

Or take that well-known playwright, now dead, whose dissatisfaction with his wives was not so much proclaimed — they were all damned fine women, he told the newspapers — as demonstrated by the fact that he dismissed them one after another, usually about four years after marrying them. He was on his sixth wife when she met, by chance, wives five and four, and confessed that things were not as they ought to be. Remarks were made that caused them to contact previous wives. Six women, five ex-wives and the present incumbent, met one afternoon — not, they said, in any spirit of anger, but from a scientific desire for psychological clarity. In each of this man's plays(we will call him John) appeared a woman, sometimes in a leading part, sometimes not, who was wise, witty, warm, tender, beautiful and all-forgiving, the last quality being most valuable, in life if not theatrically, as each of these women had discovered. They were all actresses and all had played this woman, presented under different names, in different clothes and in different epochs. The first wife had played her in his first-performed play as a suburban school teacher; the current wife had played her, evolved into full flower, four years previously in the shape of an Italian princess. They all had had the same experience, an uneasiness which developed even during those first rapturous days of an at-last-discovered perfect love, that made them feel — and all of them said they had felt it, as if they were not themselves, as if, in life, they were being forced into a role, and even, as one of them put it, as if there were always a

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third person present — a ghost. The ghost, of course, of the stage woman. And every one had experienced that moment when, betrayed, wounded, knifed to the heart by reality, their John had shouted — and with such conviction of betrayal that there was nothing at all to be said: "Why don't you behave like . . . . . ? You aren't like her at all!" — using the name for whichever incarnation of his she that *she* had in fact played. And this was the moment when, giving her a look of disgusted dismissal, he had gone off into his study to begin the new play which would incorporate, in minor or major part, the new version of this woman who must continually be recreated in art since she did not exist in life. Which play, when it was put on, would infallibly lead to her — the present wife's — divorce. Because, although she did not know, was perhaps still a half-tried girl waiting for her big chance, the new wife was already blue-printed, summoned. And from that moment about a week after the rehearsals started, when she approached the great man shyly, her beautiful eyes shining with the effort it was costing her, she said: "I must say this, I really must, forgive me, but thank you for letting me play this beautiful part in your beautiful play" — nothing was more certain than that he would marry her, and then divorce her the moment he finally understood that she was after all, only Mary, who might sulk, complain, or cry just like any woman.

Or take the case of Mary X — this time a female writer. It was when she was well on her career that her husband pointed out, and with rancour, that in almost everything she wrote occurred the same figure, male, though that was *not* the point, because he was for all practical purposes sexless, being a slight wry clown or harlequin figure, on whose face was printed the same grimace whatever he was actually doing, whether playing the flute, dancing, or being — apparently — a normal person, a smile that could not be distinguished from the contractions of the muscles which indicate pain or sorrow. Once having understood the truth of her husband's accusation, she searched through every word she had ever written. Sure enough, there he was, right from the beginning, even in those apprentice pieces written decades before and now filed away. The point was, who was he? Where did he come from? Her father? No. Her brothers? No. Her husband? Certainly not, nothing of the Petrouchka about him, and besides, the demon lover (her husband's name for him) had

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predated the husband by years. Her sons? She sincerely hoped not. Her mother then? — since such figures from the underworld are no respecters of sex. No. Who? Who, possibly? No one. There was nobody she could think of, no matter how far back she went in her childhood, who could possibly have stood in for or inspired this ambiguously enticing wraith. But she did know, in the present, one, two, perhaps three of him. Pursuing this discovery, she made the new one that while until the performance of her first play, twelve years ago, she had not met once, not once, any person, male or female, who incarnated the sad clown, since then and starting with the actor who had played the part (nicknamed Pierrot by the company even before her play was known by them) and briefly a friend before, as befitting his character, he faded into a wry offstage existence on the fringes of her life, she had known several — she was never without him. The fact was, then, that the making flesh and blood of her — but her *what*? fantasy? a figure from her night-dreams? — on stage had had the power to bring him finally towards her? Well if so, it is not a thought a sensible person could enjoy. Particularly not a writer. She contents herself, when, meeting a man who turns that unmistakeable face towards her with saying to herself, never to her husband, who so strangely and obdurately resents this rival who could never be one, *here he is again,* and with the secret contraction of the heart, the laugh that is half a shudder, which are the tributes we pay to the dark of our natures.

But to return to the light, the easily understood, with a man who I once knew who claimed that his tragedy was, while loving women, he was unable. He was always in our company, and taking us out, and being seen in public with us, but, when it came to the point — there it was, he said. Very well then. He was shooting a big film. During the course of this, it was necessary he said, to make a screen test of the leading actor for another film, also to be shot by him, in which he, the actor, might again play the leading role. Reasonable enough — it was a very different film in which a handsome alcoholic eighteenth-century rake would endeavour, but fail, to rape a beautiful village girl in circumstances which would force her to become his mistress. In the film which was currently being shot, he was playing a lusty working-class youth before whom women fell like cut grass. The scene was set for the test. In came the actor, transmogrified out

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of overalls and a cloth cap into aristocratic elegancies. It was about ten in the morning. The scene to be shot was the moment of the gentleman's failure with the lady — her lack of refinement and probably unwashed condition were responsible, the script suggested. Usually half a morning would have done for such a test. But for the whole of that day, hour after hour after hour, the studio with its armies of hands, lighting experts, camera crews, makeup women, watched the mad director with the marvellous politeness of their most necessary discipline, while *he* watched the handsome hero attempt and fail, attempt and fail, and attempt and fail and fail, again and again, to have the beautiful and scornful girl. The great expanse of the harshly-lit studio, the small area of especially-focused lights, the fourposter bed, and at least three hundred people standing about, if they were not actually assisting, forced to watch while the lusty young man who for weeks and weeks had been lighttheartedly romping his way through at least a dozen women in one film, was reduced to public impotence. Again and again. And again.

When it was all over, but not until five minutes before the trade union rules made it inevitable that the camera crews must go home to tea and their wives, the mad director said, addressing the by now exhausted young man: Well, that'll do I think. But actually, love, I do think that X (another actor) could probably be better in this particular role. You are too earthy darling, let's face it. He's more subtle.

Or the famous screen actress, American, well known for her fastidiousness about what she plays. Much dreaded is that moment when, surrounded by lawyers, agents, a husband and protectors of all kinds, she hands back a script with: "As it stands, it really is not for me — if we may suggest some changes — ?"

What then, is for her? She has played, for some decades now, women in every kind of desperate situation, ex-jailbirds, betrayed lovers, doomed invalids, sorrowing mothers. But what can be the common denominator which would cause her to say: Yes, this is for me? I once knew a man who worked, on a very humble level, in films she was starring in. What was she like? I wanted to know. It was offered that she was businesslike, adamant in her choices of co-stars, would not be photographed without the exact density of a piece of gauze being specified by lawyers, in triplicate, for certain revealing shots; that she could never be shot in such a way that her nose, not

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her best point, could emphasize itself . . . yes, but what is she *like*? Good God, said he, you must have seen her in a hundred films.

She lives, has lived, a life of improbable probity, married to a single man, with never a breath of scandal; remains a lady who insists on maintaining what she describes as the high standards of Hollywood.

Not long ago, I heard, she turned down a part which would have involved her battering to death her husband (in such a way that it would look as if someone else had done it) so that she could benefit from his will. That was, she claimed, nothing but unmotivated nasty-mindedness. Soon afterwards she was pleased to play a part where she battered to death — but openly, as it were nobly — a lawyer lover who tricked her out of a fortune.

Fairly straightforward really, daylight stuff still, as is this —

A certain English gentleman, a sort of semi-lord, being a middle son (he refers to himself with a rather tetchy refusal to conform to current prejudices as well-connected) lives in a large country house but alone, as his wife died shortly after their marriage. Alone, that is, apart from his man-servant. Failing to remarry, the usual rumours gathered about him and his way of life, dark tastes of all kinds were hinted at, and the women who had not succeeded in marrying him allowed it to be understood that it was their discovery of his secret which had cooled their pursuit.

He had been a widower for more than a decade when he was taken to what he called "a show." He did not care for the theatre at all. There he saw Mary Griffiths, a woman who had been married twice but who had announced to everyone and even to the Press that she did not intend to marry, she chose freedom.

She was an attractive blonde woman, her stage personality formed in the 'fifties to the formula of that time — casual, loud-mouthed, frank — and, as she insisted, as common as dirt. She took pains to conceal her middleclass origin — a handicap when she first started to act. She took care to play parts suited to this formula — for the most part sad dishevelled girls doomed to disharmony. "A lost ugly duckling with moments of swan," as one critic put it. A *jolie laide* said another, thus enabling Mary to describe herself as more laid than jolly, and to reap double benefit, when people protested the joke was not new, by claiming: "Well, I've never had an education — I've never pretended I did — have I then?"

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What the gentleman saw in her struck his friends into incredulity, and her into laughter, and then thought. She was the re-incarnation, he said, of his grandmother, the best horsewoman in the county, the bravest woman he had ever known — and, but of course, a great lady.

Mary wondered for a while whether to take riding lessons, in case some play or film producer saw in her what her still unknown admirer saw, but decided against it. They were introduced, and he began to court her — the only word for it. She was living at the time with a fashionable dress designer, and it was hard to say which of the two, Mary or her lover ("boy-friend") got more excitement from the ritual. John sent her flowers, formally charming notes, left visiting cards, took her to tea, drove her into the country in his Bently — or rather, sat with her in the back seat while the man-servant drove, took her to dinner. From each excursion Mary returned to mourn with her dress designer the sad lack of romance in modern life, and more than once they lay wrapped tearfully in each other's arms, because of the poetry their relationship lacked and must now always lack (there being a time and a place for everything) because for them flowers, formal notes, drives and long intimate dinners were simply impossible, out of key. Their fate had been to meet before a fitting-room mirror, to quarrel half an hour later, and to start living together a week after. Surely, they both wondered, it was not possible that gentleman John could be working up to a proposal of marriage? As Mary put it: I know he's nuts, but he's not completely gone — me, his wife, he must be joking.

About six months went by, of a patient courtship conducted to rules invisible to Mary, but which she respected. Why not? As she said, she'd have time to fit in a dozen of such relationships concurrently, apart from acting in one play and rehearsing for another and keeping her boyfriend happy. What did those people *do* with themselves in those days, she asked, putting that time at about a hundred years back, while waiting for the moment of truth? Then, at last, John told her that he had decided she was the woman for him.

"You are the woman for him?" enquired her dress-designer.

"That's what he said — I swear it."

Mary was then invited, and for the first time, to weekend at his house. Her lover made her some dinner dresses, romantic rather than

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frank, and the two of them considered her day clothes, since both felt strongly that she should be properly dressed for the occasion. But as at the time she was wearing very short skirts, if she wore skirts at all, and she was not prepared completely to lose her character, a trouser suit was concocted that was chiefly mink, which, worn with mink boots, made her look like a moon eskimo.

Mary discovered that for the weekend there would be three people in the house: herself, gentleman John, and the manservant. She found the house charming. It fitted her like a glove, she insisted to disbelieving friends. In the afternoon she was taken for a drive, the manservant driving, drank sherry in the library before dinner, the manservant acting as butler, and ate a long and formal dinner, the manservant handing the dishes he had previously chosen. Then, intrigued to the point of hysteria, as she afterwards said, Mary waited for what surely must be a dishonourable proposal.

At eleven fifty-five John leaned his handsome person towards her and said: My dear, you must understand what my feelings towards you are, but before I could ask any woman to share my life, there is something I must do. If you like, you can call it a test.

Mary was willing for the test.

John then nodded at the servant who went out of the room and came back a moment later wheeling a tall black coffin, upright. It had wheels at the feet-end, for maneuverability. This coffin was steered, upright, in front of a tall mirror. The servant, in his impeccable black clothes stood as it were to attention, at one side of it. John, with a smiling nod of encouragement at Mary, went to the coffin, and stood inside it, his hands crossed on his breast, gazing into the mirror. Inside the black coffin, black-clothed John; beside it, the black-clothed servant.

Mary said afterwards that she was bothered because no gesture or pose that occurred to her seemed to be appropriate. So she rubbed out her cigarette, folded her hands in her lap, and remained silent, smiling. At the end of a long five minutes, her John stepped down from the coffin and nodded at the servant, who wheeled it away. He leaned intimately towards her.

"Brandy?" he enquired.

"Just a little, please."

Nothing more was said about the coffin. Soon after, he escorted

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her to her room. There, but outside it, he kissed her. "And not bad either," she said, describing the moment. "Not — bad — at all!" He said that she had passed every test, and with her permission he would like to ask her to marry him. She said she would think it over, and he kissed her hand and hoped that she would sleep well.

Still thinking it over, she returned next day to London, driven by the manservant, who offered not one word about the midnight ceremony. She had decided that she would be damned if she would ask him questions, but she cracked, and so found that the ceremony of the coffin took place every night of her John's life at midnight. "It's not every woman," said the servant, "who goes along with it. Some I've seen come and go who didn't take it as you did."

Mary consulted with her lover, who designed her a bridal gown, inspired, he said, by a fifteenth century French court dress — too way out to use for current fashions, but he had been dying to make use of the ideas it inspired.

The dress ready, Mary wrote to John saying that he could have his answer, but he must come around to the dressing-room after the performance one night. If she could forgive him, he replied, he would not actually watch the performance again, one show a year was really enough for him, though it went without saying, he hoped, that he respected her profession.

When he arrived at the dressing-room door, he was made to wait. At last the dresser admitted him. He did not immediately know where to look — Mary was not there, it seemed, and since he had never been in an actress's dressing-room before, nor, for that matter, had ever been backstage, the little room with its efficient mirrors, the cold strong working light, the surgical-looking appliances on the dressing-table, the clinical jars and bottles, were hostile to him. There stood the dresser, a small devoted grey figure, hands folded, her face saying nothing, in front of something that looked like — yes, she stood aside and there it was, a long black coffin, and in it, stretched out, dressed in the white wedding gown, eyes closed, hands folded around flowers, flowers all around her, lay his love Mary, dressed for a wedding ceremony, but most adamantly dead.

"As dead as blasted Ophelia," as she said, when describing the scene to her friends and her lover in their favourite restaurant later that night.

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He stared, stiffened, and went white — all this from the dresser, because as Mary said, she was damned if she was going to open her eyes and spoil the performance. He then bowed, and went silently out, taking his dismissal like a gentleman.

The dress became a star piece in the designer's next collection, but by then he and Mary were no longer together. Discussing it in the friendly matter-of-fact way imposed on them by their style, or mode, they agreed there was something quite unassimilable about that wedding dress. Either she should put the bloody thing on and go to a registry office and be done with it, or they should call the thing off, with no hard feelings.

The dress then, *prêt à porter,* ready-to-wear, boutiqued, internationalised, led a thousand brides to the altar and the registrar's table.

Still quite straight-forward, or at least, understandable. But now enters the dark — or at least, the tale turns slightly to the moonlit side.

Mary had the dress hanging up in her cupboard for some months. She could not wear it, it was not her style, but she did not want, for some reason, to part with it. At last she wore it for a fancy dress party, and became for one night, a fifteenth-century court lady.

At the party were stage and film directors, as well as the chefs, dress designers, hair-dressers and pop stars who are the lions of our current fashionable scene. A director who had seen Mary a dozen times in her usual kind of role on stage or on television, saw her now in a new light. A man with a fine nose for what was next, he wanted to make a large full-blooded film of a nineteenth-century novel whose heroine was a head-strong aristocratic daughter in love with a revolutionary plebeian. He was dubious about Mary's voice, but it turned out her own voice did very well — he was the first person to have heard it for years. She got the part. She had to learn to ride. The film was shot in Somerset, where gentleman John had his country house.

For weeks she was riding across fields and woods where his grandmother, whose incarnation he had said she was, had won the admiration of a county. But gentleman John had gone abroad with his broken heart, taking the coffin and the manservant with him. Mary did not enquire, for to tell the truth, she hardly thought of

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him. As she said in a television interview, when she was emotionally involved in a part, she had no time for anything else. As for him, since he hates films as much as he hates the theatre, he will probably never see this film at all.

But she was observed, while taking a fence, by a local country squire. She married him, briefly — but as she said when it was all over, for long enough. She changed her style, on her way to becoming what every leading actress is doomed to become, a *grande dame* of the British theatre.

Which reminds me of the *grande dame* who was acting in what she critically described as a kitchen sink play — there were few of the other kind available at that time. Through the rehearsals she complained of the disgusting immorality of the words she was forced to speak. At lunchtimes in the pub she described at the top of a voice trained to carry her views about current morality. At the top of the same voice she told the following story. She was on tour somewhere in the North. To her dressing-room came a man she did feel she had known. This feeling was so strong that she could not bring herself to say she had no idea who he was, and she agreed to go to dinner with him. Dinner over, she was still in the dark although she hadn't been able to enjoy a mouthful for racking her brains for some clue. She at last confessed her predicament. He was rather put out, she said.

She didn't remember the restaurant, at least?

Well, there was something about it. . . .

"You don't remember that we came here every night for that marvellous week before I robbed you of your ever-so precious virginity, darling?"

"They must have redecorated it! Besides, that must have been 1935 — I haven't been here since — I think. And besides, you must know that was *before* I became a Roman Catholic. . . ."

Which reminds me of that actress who, playing a nun in a stormily religious play, used to take the habit home with her — with the connivance of the dresser, who understood her feelings. The play, she explained, lacked a true Christian insight. She wore the habit to do ironing, washing up, rinsing out her underclothes — tasks which she called "my little hair shirts".

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THE FOURTH WORLD

PART I

WHAT HAPPENED IN PARIS

Paris, July 14, 1968

The annual parade is over, rather thinly covered on television because the journalists of the O.R.T.F. have not yet returned to work. Their strike, the last remnant of the May revolution, ended a few days ago without the assurances of freedom in reporting for which they had held out.[1] After the final performance of a run of Beckett's *Endgame* at a Montmartre theater last night the principal actor held a collection box for the journalists. The sensation of an ending has been strong in Paris in the last weeks; as the police have occupied the few remaining buildings still held by students (or, in the language of the right, as the students have evacuated them) and the cleaning men with their *grattoirs* have taken down all the posters, only a few slogans in spray paint here and there, and some asphalt patches in the street around the Sorbonne where the *pavés* were torn up and used for ammunition, give outward evidence of anything's having happened at all.[2] For the crowd on the Champs Elysées this morning it was all finished; France was back to normal, and there as usual taking the salute was De Gaulle.

"*De Gaulle — mon Dieu, faites qu'il crève!*" (De Gaulle — oh God, make him drop dead!) This agonized appeal could be seen scrawled up at the Odéon, and it must have reflected the feelings of many participants in the demonstrations. For to the youth of France De Gaulle is what Johnson is (or was) to the youth of America, the infuriating symbol of a materialistic and chauvinistic society with enormous power but without a soul, a society so closed upon itself that only violence can hope to make any significant change in it. The remarkable thing about the May revolution is that it did in fact come within a hair's breadth

1. Most of them were subsequently fired.
2. During the summer all the streets in the Latin Quarter were asphalted, and the iron grills around the bottoms of the trees — also handy weapons — were all removed.

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of overthrowing the society. After De Gaulle's massive victory at the polls this is hard to remember, but it is by no means the most bizarre of the truths about this extraordinary episode. Two others, equally implausible on their face but equally borne out by the evidence, are that the whole thing was an indirect product of the war in Vietnam, and that France was saved for democracy at the very brink of collapse by the Communist Party. The conjunction of these last two points has a kind of sickening irony in the light of America's postwar foreign policy, but their lesson is too obvious for me to have to drive it home here.

Having come so close to success, however, the revolutionary movement may have spoiled its chances of pulling off anything similar again for a long time. In a way its hand was forced; the student activists, who did not expect at this stage to have much impact outside the university, had intended to wait until the fall for their big manifestation. That events would grow to such proportions in May was unforeseen: so was the general strike. Some left-wing theorists, encouraged by the magnitude of the disturbance, are now developing a new theory of revolution for advanced industrial societies, societies in which classical revolutionary theory concluded that success was impossible (whence the preference of the Communists in France for parliamentary action). According to the new theory, the initiative will be taken by students, the one group not successfully integrated into the mechanism of society and not yet having a collective stake in it; their lead will be followed by the workers in a general strike; then, however, instead of sitting stubbornly in the factories, the workers will start the processes of production and distribution up again under the direction of their own revolutionary committees, with which the public will be forced to deal for the necessities of life; meanwhile the old government can do what it likes: it will eventually be seen to be a nonfunctioning appendage (the real business being conducted directly between the workers and the people) and will die a natural death.

This theory is beautiful but absurd. It would not have been absurd if it had been formulated a few months ago, for the position of the Communists was then not as clear as it is now. If in May the Communist Party and the unions had called for a real take-over of the factories and for their operation as revolutionary enterprises, instead of behaving like respectable democratic organizations, it is hard to guess what would have happened. Probably the Army would eventually have broken the movement, but that would have amounted to civil war. Now however it is evident that the Fifth Republic has undergone a kind of catharsis in its body politic, and another general strike in the near future, or even a successful large-scale manifestation, seems out of the ques-

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tion. There was an outbreak last night near the Bastille but it was quickly crushed: the maintenance of public order is now at the top of De Gaulle's agenda, and there is plenty of evidence that it will be maintained if necessary by brutal repression and at the expense of justice. As to the Communist Party, it can hardly be thought of as a revolutionary agency any more, having been offered a revolution and publicly declined the offer. M. Waldeck-Rochet, its secretary-general, said a few days ago that the most pressing danger to the party came from "leftists."[3] And there is no other united organization capable even of thinking in such terms. There is a lot of ideological spirit but very little political strength.

The trouble with the May revolution was that it was swallowed whole by bourgeois democracy, just as Marcuse had feared.[4] What prevents the continuing alliance of the students and workers is that the students have already enjoyed and seen through the benefits of bourgeois society while the workers are still struggling for those benefits; the students are ready to destroy what the workers still dream of attaining. "The students did not go to the barricades for a few more lecture-rooms, and I think we are safe in saying that the young workers who joined in did not do so for a seven percent raise," said Alain Geismar of *S.N.E.Sup.* (*Syndicat national de l'enseignement supérieur*, the university teachers' union) at a rally on May 27.[5] But it is easy for the privileged to overrate the idealism of the underprivileged: the workers got their raise and went back to work.

It is therefore in the universities rather than in the country at large that further developments are to be looked for (not that a too repressive régime might not blow up in an even more spectacular way later on, only the government would have to be quite remarkably stupid for this to happen). How the *rentrée* in October will be managed is hard to visualize at this point.[6] Something has to give somewhere eventually, the French university system being about a half-century behind in its attitudes and resources, and the chaos this year is unbelievable — courses unfinished, examinations postponed, candidates for advanced degrees refusing to take them, and so on. In fact while the tension generated among the students by the war in Vietnam was the

3. *Le Monde*, July 11, 1968.

4. Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man*, Boston, Beacon Press, 1964.

5. Alain Ayache, ed., *Les Citations de la révolution de mai*, Paris, Pauvert 1968, p. 81.

6. In fact, under the leadership of the new Minister of Education, M. Edgar Faure, the French government has in three months radically overhauled the entire system of University administration.

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immediate cause of the trouble, the ground of general student and faculty discontent had been prepared long before. But what happened in May was out of all proportion to that discontent; it was the by now classic combination of administrative insensitivity and police brutality that provided the needed catalyst.

About the disturbances themselves I shall say very little, since after the first outbreak the story is reasonably well known, but it may be worth stating again how things began and how events led up to this beginning. On May 3 M. Roche, the Rector of the Sorbonne, looked out of his window and saw that the courtyard was full of students. Alarmed by this unusual circumstance, he called the police. The Prefect of Police, M. Grimaud, thought this an unwise move, and refused to answer the call without written confirmation from the Minister of Education, which however was promptly furnished. Although there had been a good deal of recent unrest in the French universities (some of it inspired by Columbia) the students at the Sorbonne had, up to that point, been rather passive, in spite of a good deal of prodding from their more activist colleagues elsewhere to get into the swing of things—protest, occupy a building, do *something*. But the Rector's call for the police broke an immemorial tradition of the immunity of the university from local interference; it was an offense beyond forgiveness. *"Les flics à la Sorbonne, les deux mots ça a vraiment tout fait bouger"*[7] (the cops at the Sorbonne, those two words really started everything off).

The meeting in the courtyard had been somewhat out of the ordinary for the Sorbonne, since it was partially organized by the *enragés*, members of the Movement of March 22 who had come into town from Nanterre, a university in the suburbs whose Dean, M. Grappin, had (also with the help of the police) closed the campus the previous day. Both Roche and Grappin had had genuine worries about what might happen at their respective institutions. The movement of March 22, whose sole unifying principle was support of the Vietnamese people against American imperialist aggression (although the meeting on March 22 at which it was formed dealt with more general ideological concerns and university reform as well),[8] had been sitting-in in various buildings at Nanterre off and on for about a month, and the right-wing student organization FNEF (*Fédération nationale des étudiants de France*, to be distinguished from the left-wing student union, UNEF) had threatened to break them up with violent action. At the Sorbonne the fascist action group Occident had made similar threats, and on May 2 had in fact

7. Emile Copferman, ed., *Mouvement du 22 mars: ce n'est qu'un début, continuons le combat*, Paris, Maspero, 1968, p. 23.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 17.

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set fire to the offices of a local union of students. One of the reasons why so many students were gathered on May 3 was that a new attack was expected.

When the police were called at Nanterre the reaction was less violent than at the Sorbonne simply because Nanterre had less in the way of tradition to be violated — it is indeed a fairly new university, and since it has already won a reputation for radicalism and unrest (the film *"La Chinoise"* was shot there and is about one of the Maoist *groupuscules* of which so much was heard during the revolution) disturbances of all sorts were less surprising. It was consequently in the streets of the Latin Quarter that the real confrontation unfolded, and this fact in itself gave a double rhetorical boost to the movement. The Nanterre students had been *enragés* on ideological grounds; there were comparatively few of them, but the police action enraged thousands of less politically conscious students who found themselves shut out of their own buildings. Other students and the general public (at first strongly on the side of the students but gradually becoming less and less sympathetic as the violence continued) were aroused by the incredible viciousness of the police and the government security forces (the *Compagnies républicaines de securité* which inspired the slogan "CRS=SS!", shouted and scrawled all over Paris). Stories of strangers, women with children, old people bludgeoned and arrested whether they had anything to do with the manifestations or not, together with photographic evidence, circulated in large quantities.[9] And once started the violence had to work itself out, through the now familiar sequence of the barricades, the strikes, the *chienlit,* the elections.

I said earlier that there was now very little trace of all this, but that observation overlooked one extremely important, impressive and disturbing phenomenon. The Paris bookstores were literally full of books about the revolution little more than a month after it started. One example of the more trivial kind of publication to have emerged is a collection of graffiti, *Les Murs ont la parole*[10] (idiomatically "the walls have the floor," *la parole* — the word — being what passes from speaker to speaker in French debates) which was reported in *Le Monde* the other day to have run to 65,000 copies in three weeks. It is true that a kind of mania for writing and sticking things on walls broke out among the demonstrators everywhere, partly in imitation of the Chinese cultural revolutionaries, but more perhaps as a bottled-up reaction against the

9. See especially *Le Livre noir des journées de mai,* Paris, Seuil, 1968, and Philippe Labro, ed., *Les Barricades de mai,* Paris, Solar, 1968.

10. Julien Besançon, ed., *"Les Murs ont la parole," journal mural mai 1968,* Paris, Tchou, 1968.

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injunction *"Défense d'afficher — loi de 29 juillet 1881"* which has been part of the Parisian superego as long as anyone can remember. But although there were brilliant, witty, moving and above all serious slogans everywhere, most of them simply didn't deserve preservation. It seems, however, that everything that could be conceivably used as an excuse for publication has been used: citations, photographs, posters, reportage, commentary — there must already be twenty-five titles and new ones appear almost daily, printed, sewn, bound, with glossy covers, selling at 6 francs, 10 francs, 18 francs, 28 francs, a fantastic feat of production for the printers and a veritable bonanza for the publishers. What is disturbing about all this is that it is just another symptom of Marcuse's one-dimensional society, part of the process of digesting and neutralizing one of the only serious attempts to make a fundamental change in the order of things that has come along in fifty years. An indignant tract was briefly in circulation against the commercial exploitation of the revolution, and its indignation was fully justified.

The contrast between a single tract and the flood of paper which is coming off the presses may be all too accurate a symbol of the May revolution in the face of the sheer weight of Western industrial-bourgeois habits. Whatever university reforms may be won — and there will be some — the vision of a purified society which quite genuinely animated some of the leaders of the movement will certainly not be realized. That of course is the fate of all revolutions, even the successful ones, especially in their later phases, which explains why Russia is completely *passé* but China and Cuba still command enthusiasm. But in this case it seemed, for a while at least, that the vision was not merely Utopian, that it had a chance of coming into being, that indeed it had come into being for a week or two. The conviction that there must be something better than the values and social organization of the prosperous middle classes is gaining ground among students all over the world, and in Paris the revolutionaries thought they had a taste of it. It is difficult to convey the tone of conviction, commitment, discipline and hope that pervaded the atmosphere in the new Faculty of Medicine, one of the only faculties still liberated when I arrived at the end of June (although by then most of the hope had evaporated). In many places it was hard no doubt to keep faith in these things, what with Katangese rebels, teeny-boppers and other dubious types attracted by the prospect of promiscuity or a good fight, but in the Faculty of Medicine at least, until the last few days when the students thrown out of the Censier center took refuge there, affairs were conducted with great responsibility and seriousness. (The police found no vandalism at all after a period of six weeks.) Students and faculty, working together, drew up a white

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paper on the reform of medical education which, as they put it, accomplished more in those six weeks than the administration had been able to accomplish in ten years.[11] Everywhere there was a sense of participation, of community, of a kind of collective movement and purpose in refreshing contrast to the authoritarian and hierarchical system of influence and personal prestige which has characterized higher education in France.

The revolution turned up one personality, it is true, in *Dany le Rouge* (Danny the Red), a German sociology student from Nanterre named Daniel Cohn-Bendit who was the leader of the original *enragés*. But as Cohn-Bendit himself took pains to point out in a number of press conferences, personalities were unimportant, indeed to take any notice of them would have been to fall into the well-known ideological heresy. In Germany after it was all over he said, without regret, "Six months ago nobody had heard of Cohn-Bendit, six months from now everybody will have forgotten him." Viewed from a democracy whose electoral processes are almost entirely built on the cult of personality (which makes it well-nigh impossible to take a genuinely historical view of anything at all) this may just seem like personal modesty — in itself, be it noted, a personal virtue, and one which the cult of personality knows well how to exploit. But it can also be seen as reflecting a genuine and fundamental conviction that what happened in Paris was *history*, transcending any of the participants in it. In virtue of that fact (not because of the violence or the barricades) it qualified as revolutionary for those involved. And the failure — as the participants see it, the betrayal — of the revolution may indicate that Western democracy has succeeded, at least for the time being, in bringing history to a standstill. It is not an encouraging thought.

Peter Caws

U. S. POSTAGE PAID FROM CHICAGO

Monday afternoon, twenty-four hours after the Democratic Convention began, I told a writer-friend not to come to Chicago, that the street scene she anticipated wouldn't come off. Tom Hayden, Rennie

11. Comité de synthèse des étudiants en médecine de Paris, *Livre blanc de la réforme,* tome 1, Paris, multilith, dated 14-6-68.

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Davis and other leaders of the Mobilization had hoped that 200,000 demonstrators would heed their call; they publicly predicted an influx of 100,000; but Monday it was clear that only 5,000 — maybe not quite 5,000 — were in town.

If Mayor Daley had played his cards right he would have defused the demonstrators by letting them sleep in Lincoln Park and granting them a sidewalk near the Amphitheatre. The nation would then have seen a militant but meager protest, far smaller than ones it has grown accustomed to. Hizzoner and Humphrey could have read from the traditional script: the existence of this demonstration shows the openness of our society, whereas its size indicates confidence that the Administration is seeking peace.

The remarkable insight of the Mobilization chiefs was that the Administration could no longer or would no longer roll with the antiwar punch. Daley was too vicious and inflexible; Johnson would be off somewhere muttering, "those bastards, they spoiled my years in office, fuck 'em!" And therefore an ugly and overt repression could be evoked in Chicago and etched into the national consciousness. As Hayden put it, "America is reaching a point of bankruptcy and decay so complete that only military tools can protect the political institutions. Since the rise of the black movement and the New Left in 1960, the federal and corporate powers have been unable to create the social reforms which are the key to gaining social peace. As reform has failed, the reliance on police power has become more visible, now reaching a point where even peaceful demonstrations are met with force and terror in all parts of the country. . . . Our victory lies in progressively demystifying a false democracy, showing the organized violence underneath reformism and manipulation."

Daley's first mistake — to use the gloating terms the demonstrators adopted by the end — was to enforce a strict curfew throughout Old Town and its eastern border, Lincoln Park — turf which Chicago's young people have made their special hangout. It was at a curfew check that the cops shot and killed Dean Johnson, a seventeen-year-old American Indian from South Dakota, several days prior to the convention. (Since the police version of the killing had Johnson in town for the convention, Daley's boast that no lives were lost is a flat lie.)

Starting the night of Johnson's murder, the police charged and gassed the Yippies' Lincoln Park assembly area at 11:45 every night. These confrontations became dress rehearsals for nomination night. (It was in Lincoln Park that many realized how good a gas mask a turtleneck shirt could make; you just pull the collar over your nose and keep spitting into it.) People who had made other billeting plans joined the

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Lincoln Park regulars, and even a few delegates, celebrities and reporters began coming to the nightly showdowns. On Sunday night I saw a McCarthy girl, sweet in her madras and still worrying that the police, in their ignorance, might give the country a bad name, turn to a friend in the park and say, "Oh, I hope they're not going to arrest Monsieur Genet!" They didn't arrest him, but they gassed him, and Ginsberg, Burroughs and a thousand less famous citizens. The spirit of desperate resistance so obvious by August 28 stemmed from being gassed in the park and searched on the streets more than from the war in Vietnam.

It was police behavior in Lincoln Park that convinced most everybody that the long-planned march on the Amphitheatre was unnecessary — just do some mass loitering in Grant Park, across from the Hilton, where the cameras could catch the police response. In other words, the police created the mood and suggested the tactic which gave the Mobilization its ultimate success.

"Isn't it fantastic," Hayden asked rhetorically Tuesday morning: "kids fighting for a park they hadn't even heard of two days ago? It means we can stage confrontations any time, anywhere, just by challenging them for a piece of land."

This is the strategy that he and his closest co-workers have now settled on: confrontations everywhere to reiterate that the U.S. government operates by force and coercion, not consent and participation. It is a strategy that captures the mood of a frustrated student generation, many of whose members now want to participate in street action or even to wreak violence on such symbols of the American Empire as cops and university buildings. In theory, mini-Chicagos will win the respect of blacks and the participation support of young people across the country. They will also serve to radicalize liberals in the same way that McCarthy followers were influenced by the Mobilization.

It is now taken for granted that the Mobilization had a radicalizing effect on the McCarthy camp. But in fact only a handful of McCarthy kids ever crossed Michigan Avenue to join the demonstrations in Grant Park. McGovern people were much more sympathetic, and it was McGovern himself who was first to visit the room in the Hilton where injured campaign workers were being treated. McCarthy's Thursday afternoon speech in Grant Park was listened to critically — boos when he said he would continue to work "within the system," cheers when he added, "but outside the two major parties." For me the McCarthy—camp attitude toward the Mobilization was summed up on the amazed face of Senator Joseph Tydings, the young liberal from Maryland, as he watched SDS kids heckle the beaten candidate: "Hey, McCarthy:

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what about Socialism? . . . Hey, man, what about getting rid of the system that caused this goddamn war?"

Friday, after the victory picnic, I told my writer-friend apologetically that I had underestimated the ability of the Mobilization leaders to convert Monday's failure into a triumph. Now, in retrospect, I realize that the seeming disaster was itself part of the choreography. From Mississippi to Columbia, the New Left has won its major victories by getting pushed around; Chicago followed suit. Alternatives to bunking in the park were not arranged — so the city's refusal to let people sleep there seemed more outrageous; a large bail fund was not raised — so people had to linger in the lockup. At one point Hayden even prepared a tape, to be broadcast from the Hilton into Grant Park, announcing that he was inside, and inviting everyone to join him. This, too, would have led to a "radicalizing experience" — a slaughter on the Petrograd scale — but the friend he entrusted to broadcast it finally refused.

But there was no conscious cynicism in all this. Even Hayden's call to the Hilton, cagey through it seems in the recounting, was not manipulative. As noted, his strategy is finely geared to the mood of his constituents. If he gave them bloodshed in Chicago, he gave them what they wanted. Thousands of *declassé* students and college graduates are really itching for action, motivated by the unworthiest personal needs, ("Making a Revolution is the only way to get a stiff cock," I heard a brilliant 38-year-old economist say) as well as lucid political arguments. Most of them see the traditional American acquiescence and flexibility in the face of unrest as a source of America's staying power. For years they have been talking about imminent repression (at every New Left gathering one hears references to the concentration camp sites, the 60,000 radicals to be rounded up when Hoover gets — or gives — the word); and by now many would rather be jailed than patronized. Their mood is also influenced by the voluntary negritude that has energized young people from Mississippi to Haight Street. In Chicago they adopted the Black Panther vocabulary for dealing with the police.

Now any serious radical with a sense of history knows that the armed might of the state has to be neutralized if you mean to take power. In the weeks before the convention, organizers at Fort Hood, Texas, had made significant headway with Regular Army soldiers scheduled for riot-control duty in Chicago. Eventually more than 100 black GI's refused to embark; forty-three of them were arrested and court-

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martialed. An unknown number of white soldiers shipped out for Chicago with plans to express their sympathy for the demonstrators at the most dramatic moment. They were stationed on the outskirts of the city and never called to duty, probably because the High Command realized that the six-monthers of the Illinois National Guard were more trustworthy. In any case, the Guard units might have been equally susceptible to the blandishments of the demonstrators; but no appeal was made until Wednesday afternoon, when a leaflet explaining the Mobilization's goals, "To The Troops,"[1] was circulated.

Another leaflet, "To The Police,"[2] also appeared Wednesday. It began, "Our argument in Chicago is not with you"; and made the point that the cops' present working conditions — a twelve-hour-day with no overtime pay — were dictated by Daley, not the Mobilization. But it was too late — the self-fulfilling prophecy — "Pigs!" — had already been made. And in any case, civil treatment from the police would have cost the Mobilization its public-relations victory.

Leo Whalen

HAPPENINGS FOR REAL

What's astonishing about the interpretations of the European student movements in both the Soviet and the Western Press is that they're in perfect agreement. Despite certain predictable differences in formulation, all the critiques point to the same weakness, to what is apparently considered the Achilles' heel of the movement: its inability to shake neo-capitalist society to its foundations.

Now one need not be an expert in revolution (or even a professor of sociology) to grasp immediately that Germany especially is not in 1968 in a "revolutionary" situation — at least according to Lenin, who held the "impossibility of the system continuing as before" an essential aspect of any revolution. On the one hand, the Communists make this point: revolutions, and the organization of revolutionary forces, follow certain normal stages of development, which must bear some relation to the social and historical structure of the system under attack. A

1. See page 549.
2. See page 550.

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revolution didn't take place in May — or rather, one couldn't have taken place then.

The indignation of the German taxpayer, on the other hand, is more easily understandable. His taxes are rising significantly, only to enable these students — who already play with material and cultural advantages which their parents wouldn't have dared dream of — to devote themselves more to dirtying up their universities than to repaying their tuition by taking up some useful and lucrative scientific work. On every side, the reproach heard most frequently the last few months is not that the students are those most oppressed by the system, but that they are the least justified in challenging it.

• Now clearly, the Germans weren't opposed merely to a particular law; nor were the French simply in favor of university reform (be it of the most radical kind). *Reductio ad absurdum*: suppose that, intimidated by the pressure of street demonstrations, the Bundestag had postponed the vote on the *lois d'exceptions,* or that M. Peyrefite had drawn up a whitepaper on university reform in the first days of the strike — would that have prevented the confrontations?

For the street demonstrations questioned even more (or perhaps even less) than the structure of government, that classic objective of classic political movements. Law, order and authority themselves were being challenged, despite the fact that even their minimal efficiency promotes some kind of economic and political stability. In fact, what seemed to have been challenged was a terminology, a certain rapport, or rather a certain rupture between practice and theory embodied in language.

Only an overactive imagination could see in today's Germany the gateway to the revolution. The grand illusion created by the German press was that we were going to find ourselves suddenly in the presence of violence. While France was cracking wide open, exploding, foundering, in Germany the winds of hope didn't even blow up a storm. But perhaps in one way it was more reassuring to get from the German students a symbolic exercise in nonviolence. Their tolerance, and the absence of violence, was a demonstration not so much of their impotence in the face of revolution, or of the strength of the conservative structures, as of a kind of break with the structures themselves, a refusal to use any brute force, a faith in reason and in the word.

It's true, though, that this faith, carried too far, submerged the German events in a sea of words which cut off the rhythm, the nerve, the *pathetique*, of the slumbering violence of a new world. The bored

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audience left the hall, pointing out that a semester had been lost. But the students themselves stayed by the thousands, listening with peaceful resignation to incorrigible bores, who finally threw them into apathy or indifference. This is why talk finally cannot be justified — instead of leading to rebellion, involuntarily, it bogs action down in filibusters. Ironically, it's precisely in this kind of speculative resignation, this tendency to justify, this critical and autocratic passion, at times openly tiresome, that the weakness — and the fascinating power — of the German student movement rests.

It is impossible to render these contradictions in conventional political language. Nevertheless, we've witnessed the learned elaborations of a most distinguished professor from Frankfurt, who, after having been considered a "doctrinarian" of the movement, tastes once again the academic pleasure of giving Marxist lessons on the inevitable limits of protest, and the Oxford historian rediscovering in the passions of these last months the recurrance of an ancestral Teutonic fury. After having deplored for so many years the obedience to authority, the conformism and the apoliticism of German youth, after having taught us that democracy means an apprenticeship even in disobedience, when their propositions are taken seriously the professors are shocked.

For suddenly here are these students, generously stipended, who can't face society's constraining rituals, who are disrupting the five-day political week, upsetting the weekend intellectual, and all the reassuring murmurs of conferences on social and literary humanism, and who have plunked us suddenly right in the middle of a paradox. What the students were doing might have been a challenge to the existing order, but it was also an attack on the rules of the game of revolutionary tactics, in so far as that game, classically played, requires canniness, violence and dictatorship. In fact, the action of the students amounted to bringing derision — the horse-laugh — into the street, or to making Utopia the source of rules of conduct: it was a case of Art for Art's Sake in revolution. And all this in spite of the talk about political order.

The paradox, however, is that Art for Art's sake, brought down into the street, ceases to be gratuitous. The students' actions may have constituted esthetic spectacle in its purest form, but it was precisely this gratuitous quality which so enraged the bourgeoisie. The shopkeepers in Bonn simply could not understand how two thousand students from Berlin could make such a long trek for the sole purpose of attending a meeting one rainy afternoon, a meeting which, no matter how you looked at it, led nowhere. The bourgeois takes being insulted and attacked quite well, but he draws the line at having his intelligence challenged.

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Presented with something incomprehensible, he sets an inquisition going.

Here one is especially struck by the resemblance between the French student movement and modern art. The participation, whether personal or by influence, of Max Ernst, Michaux, Sartre, Dali (in the manifesto of 18 May), Picasso and Calder, and also of Jacques Monad, Jean Rostand, Paul Ricoeur, Lucien Goldmann, among others is significant in this respect. All the objections raised against what could be called the awakening of the word can be found in almost identical terms in the classic inquisition against modern art: it was maintained that it lacked structure, that its ends were far beyond its means, that it didn't serve any precisely defined purpose, that it was unhealthy and indecent. "This Stinks," said Prefect Grimaud, as he left the Odéon after his release: exactly the way modern art stank, in Jdanov's critiques.

• Now, of course, it really remains to be seen if the same kind of failed success under which modern art collapsed doesn't also (and to the same extent) affect the student movement. The art of the lower depths, inaugurated by Gorky, the underground condition, was voluntarily assumed by the students in Paris, notably in their slogans, which were filled with black humor: "We rise out of the depths?" "The thief — that's us!" In this almost masochistic will to adopt the simplest stance, the most elementary postures (squatting in the streets, sitting), to break down words into chanted syllables, probably even to wash as little as possible in order to become one with the damned of the earth, the elemental quality of words was revealed and exploited. The words used were not (as some have maintained) unorganized, but organized into *sui-generis* phrases and chains of thought possessed of a powerful emotional and visceral resonance. All those monologues which were unanimously respected in the streets and the lecture halls, those demonstrations of language salvaging itself from the oratorical traditions and the solemn rhythm of the courtroom — weren't they all reminiscent of the broken, chopped, agitated understatement of a Büchner, a Brecht, a Beckett, or a Peter Handke?

Indeed, since plainly man's only essence is that which others give to him — and that through the intermediary of things, of relations — he attempts to give himself one through his own speech. A futile enterprise? A hoax? The answer lies more in the realm of linguistic philosophy than that of political theory. For the time being, let's suppose that, exactly like Kasper in Handke's play,[1] the people of Paris — not only

1 *Kasper*, by Peter Handke. Premiere, May, 1968, in Frankfurt and Düsseldorf. Published by Suhrkamp Verlag.

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the students, but also hundreds of workers emerging from their silence, petit-bourgeois, technicians, schoolmasters, engineers, and research workers — sucked in by the irresistible movement of words, tried to give themselves an identity by mastering words, those words which destroy as well as those which order and create. There is no one who doesn't use — or abuse — the word "creator," who doesn't babble about a project having to do with reforming relations and structures, in these times of kermesse madness (all this of course the result of cultural and philosophical assimilation). To hear students discussing *L'Etre* and *L'Avoir* for over five hours in a lecture hall of the Sorbonne; to hear them repeating the mottoes of the Nicholites of the Middle Ages who walked barefoot and shared all their worldly goods; to watch them considering "being" as infinitely noble and "having" as infinitely reprehensible (contrary to all the marxisms of affluence, of production, of the "frigidaire") — this was to witness something more than a show. It came close to embodying the values of a culture (which in its own time was called aristocratic, esoteric, decadent). Was it not Valery who rejoiced to see himself translated into action, he who valued above all efficiency, and the supremely regulated and constructive gesture? Compare here the key phrase, the obsession with possessing of the world in *Kasper*: "I would like to become such a one, as another has once already been." Compare again Kasper's education in action by thought, the stages of his humanization through the combination of words and phrases.

And although they have been accused of simply having gregarious instincts, didn't those demonstrators in Paris the 13th of May feel that sudden private illumination in the midst of public solidarity which reveals as much in expressions of gratitude to those who were "with us," as in outbursts of irrepressible foul-mouthedness toward those who betrayed them? In the past, one thing which always characterized large demonstrations organized formally "from above," was that they took place amid general boredom and with an inevitable feeling of alienation and distaste. The students certainly shared this feeling when they said: "we reject a world in which the certainty of not dying of hunger is exchanged for the risk of dying of boredom." And that observation itself suggests the sustained poetry of the revolutions of youth: permanent humor, joy in new beginnings, seriousness, and in the face of potential violence, a sense of responsibility and in the face of chaos a refusal to participate in useless destruction.

Contradictions abound. The very night of the occupation of the Sorbonne, one of the first items on the agenda was the re-painting of the

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Puvis de Chavannes' murals by volunteer artists. The discussion was heated and bitter, and unanimity was never reached. The opposition — in the minority — stated that the murals were of historical value, and that the students would be treated like vandals, etc. But the majority, in their action committee, nonetheless decided not to paint the walls of the Sorbonne. Instead, during the following days, excellent graffiti were posted, while at Nanterre the cold modern walls were literally covered by horrible daubs. The reactions to the professors were the most varied of all. Aragon, for example, was booed and Garady listened to. Sartre, who was "rehabilitated" late in the game as a result of his interview with Cohn-Bendit, suffered fewer insults than someone like Ricoeur, who in the very beginning (more for academic than for religious reasons) rallied to the movement almost without reservation.

One thing is certain: the motivations of such a movement can't be reduced to one common denominator. There are some groups who act out of despair; there are some who fight for their beefsteak the way others act to bring the human order closer to the Kingdom of God. Christians young and old rallied to the confrontation in France. Taking a position against the actual objective class situation, they cleared a path which no doubt the young Marx would have traveled. That is to say, the inference of values in this case — religious, ethical, etc. — was accomplished in a way difficult for a "marxist-leninist" to understand: not through a dependence on politics but independently of it.

• For revolution is as real as art. In modern industrial society, talking revolution doesn't mean talking politics — it means talking ethics or esthetics or religion. From Lenin's point of view, in which politics is understood in economic terms, revolution is much less possible than radical reform of structures. (This is due to the irreversibility of technical progress, which is slowed down or speeded up only as a function of the differing ends that society as a whole assigns to it.) As a theoretical concept, revolution goes beyond class war (an idea which is itself in need of revision). Revolution means a challenge to the style of life created by the affluent society, a return to natural needs, universal satisfactions. It applies equally to all social strata and all classes. That is, the idea of revolution tends to universalize itself. As Marcuse has shown, the reason why workers participated so little in the revolts in Germany was that they were so well integrated into the system. In France, a more stringent economic situation caused a great number of workers to strike. This doesn't mean that their objectives were at all

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different from those of the students, even though, taken as a whole, the working class doesn't understand the language of esthetic debate and is distressed by that of ethical argument.

The Utopia of modern art, the return to the model of the natural man, doesn't move the working class as a class. Nevertheless, the hope of a "mutation" of modern society rests in this Utopian language. The collective good, the end of alienation, equality and all the other humanistic revolutionary goals won't be achieved through the acquisition of T.V. sets or Mercedes, but only when the new stimuli of work correspond to a new image of life. This is why the rights of language, creator above all of new values, must be reestablished after the language of bourgeoisified societies, or societies which are in the process of being bourgeoisified, has been dismantled. A new constructivism in language seems to be beginning in Germany under the guise of a neostructuralism. (And like every new ideology, structuralism is two-faced: technocratic on the one side, humanitarian on the other.)

The inflation of language, which on the level of the real happening, can appear to be demagogic, and on the theoretical level, puerile or metaphysical, is in any case an essentially new and meaningful phenomenon in the second half of the twentieth century. The eruption of spectacle into real life, the dismemberment of language and its reconstitution according to the sociological intentions of a humanitarian marxism, seem to be equally unimpeachable phenomena. If language is, as Heidegger would have it, the "House of Being," then it would indeed seem that the world wants to construct for itself an edifice akin in overall plan to the Marxist model. (But at the same time, the re-creation of life according to the laws of the theater, of order-disorder which gives meaning to "life-thinking," moves us into a further phase of human investigation.) At the very least, the student movement represents the rough of such a model, albeit (for the moment) a negative one.

Horia Bratu

(Translated from the French by Stephen Donadio and Caroline Rand Herron.)

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THE FOURTH WORLD
PART II
DOCUMENTS

RAPPORT INTERDISCIPLINAIRE NANTERRE, 11 JUIN 1968

Henceforth social reality and the University's function in relation to it shall be the object of permanent criticism and questioning. To the limit of our possibilities, we will have to subvert the whole academic institution from the functions assigned to it by the ruling class and by our deepest repressions, to make of it a place where we can elaborate the means of a critical understanding and expression of reality. The return to classes in 1968 at Nanterre will not be a return to normal, the normal being cultural oppression. Our task is not simply to make the Faculty

Translator's Note: The "May Revolution" in France was first of all, and perhaps most lastingly, a revolution of the word. With the proliferation of flamboyant tracts composed, mimeographed and distributed almost instantaneously, with the stark and beautiful posters of the *atelier populaire* of Beaux-Arts, perhaps most of all with the graffiti that appeared on walls everywhere to give voice to the individual's participation in the new order of things, the students achieved a redistribution of the power of the word, and of the word as power. They seized and exercised a language which had belonged to the "others," to the forces of alienation, to the government, to official sources of information, to propaganda and advertising, gave it a new vitality and originality, and made it serve imagination in power.

When, in the occupied Faculties, the "paritary committees" — the soviets of students and teachers — sat down to transform the movement of revolt into the constitution of a new University, this revolution of the word informed their efforts, determined content and style. The committee reports were to be the first texts in a Cultural Revolution which would end repression, in both the Marxist and Freudian senses. One of the most remarkable of these reports was that produced by the "Interdisciplinary Committee" of the Faculty of Letters and Social Sciences of Nanterre, where the "movement" first began. Translated here is the general preamble, which was followed by reports in the specific areas of "Culture and Critique," "Structure and Organization of the Faculty," "Form and Content of Teaching." In default of acknowledgment to the report's anonymous authors, may I at least express my thanks to Louis Marin, Assistant de Philosophie at Nanterre and a member of the Committee, who gave me the document.

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run: for whom? to what ends? etc. It is rather to criticize and deconstruct the institution, to determine the orientation that we wish to give to our work, to determine a program for this work and to realize it.

I. *May 1968*

1) The crisis begun in May, 1968, is not a "crisis": through it, we enter into a new period of history. What has been aimed at and shaken, through criticism and through struggle, is not only the political regime, but the social system; and not only capitalist private property, but the entire organization of life, all the "values" that modern societies, whether of the West or the East, use or fabricate, impose or insinuate, to disarm desire. You have understood nothing about our movement if you do not see this: what swept across France — to the point of creating a power vacuum — was not the spirit of professional demands, nor the wish for a political change, but the desire for other relations among men. The force of this desire has shaken the edifice of exploitation, oppression and alienation; it has frightened all the men, the organizations, the parties directly or indirectly interested in the exercise of power, and they are attempting by all means to suppress it. They will never have done with doing so.

2) The political oppression of the citizen, the socioeconomic exploitation of labor, have been denounced in word and act. But the movement has attacked cultural alienation with the same vigor. Thus it has brought the revolutionary critique into the whole of the sphere to which the modern ruling classes have extended their empire. Within the University, this critique has been directed above and beyond the old hierarchical relations, to the exteriority of knowledge in relation to life, its connivance with power; within society, to the monopoly of knowledge by one social class, to the mercantilization and deproblematization of the information distributed to the other classes, to the proffering of cultural objects favoring only those identifications willed by the ruling powers, to the exclusion of the working classes from the means of understanding and expression. What the movement wishes to destroy is the separation between culture and social experience (the division between intellectual and manual labor); and also the separation between decision and practice (the division between managers and executors); and finally the defamation and recuperation of creative force.

3) Our critique is not merely verbal, it is criticism-as-practice: the offensive blockage of the academic institution and its subversion to revolutionary ends, physical combat against so-called order, transgressions. By its forms of struggle, the movement makes manifest the weakness of the overall system. It breathes new life into the workers' struggle,

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which had been channeled and absorbed into the verbal and legal forms of protest that the system imposed on it. To the continuous violence of oppression in the factories, in the pursuit of leisure, in the family, in the establishments called "educational," the movement opposes liberty to speak from equal to equal, ridicule of all hierarchy, courage to pose all questions, destruction of forced solitude, dialogue and initiative. Our violence consists in reestablishing the word and the expressive gesture, for the violence that opposes us sets up reflections. That we are judged for our violence is simply droll.

4) The radical and practical nature of our critique calls forth an echo from among the workers, especially the young workers. Questioning begins to come out from the university ghetto; the critique of cultural alienation begins to merge with the critique of socioeconomic exploitation and political oppression. An embryonic union of the workers' and students' struggles is frmed. It is weak in the face of the enemy to be overthrown; it is formidable if one compares it to the isolation and despair which presided over the class struggle before May, 1968.

5) The future of the revolution under way depends entirely on the reinforcement of the union of students and workers. The students bring to the struggle their denunciation of culture and values; isolated, their critique would be recuperated by the system, for nothing prevents the ruling classes from entertaining themselves with the spectacle of the cultural revolution. The workers contribute their experience and their denunciation of exploitation; isolated, and in the absence of a revolutionary sector, their struggle loses its dimension of global questioning, and remains confined to professional demands. In modern society, where technical progress increases the importance of intellectual labor, the student is no longer a young bohemian bourgeois, he is a fraction in training of the social forces of production. That is why his desertion from the camp of the ruling class can take on decisive importance.

6) If it is to achieve this union, the movement must not let itself be intimidated by defamation, wherever it may come from, especially must not let itself be disarmed from within by self-censorship. That we are called provocateurs and adventurers[1] would not merit a second's

1 The reference is to the French Communist Party (and the Communist-led trade unions) which originally denounced the student activists as a *groupuscule* of provocateurs and adventurers, and throughout the May crisis maneuvered to foil any revolutionary union of students and workers outside Party structures, to preserve intact the traditional policy of "no enemies to the Left" and to maintain its claim to be the exclusive spokesman of the proletariat. Daniel Cohn-Bendit in turn denounced the Party as a bunch of "Stalinist slobs."

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attention did the insult not mask a dangerous attempt to cut the student movement off from the worker movement, and to maintain the latter within the social order and established politics. We must counterattack by consolidating our union with the workers on the basis of a critique of this "order" in its entirety. But this union is not a subordination, either of workers to students or students to workers. The student movement has brought to the revolution a dimension that the workers movement, such as it is today, had lost. The student movement is far more than a detonator in the class struggle; it is a constituant element in theory and practice. For the real problem posed by modern societies is no longer simply that of the suppression of the boss as the owner of capital, but that of the separation between those who give directives and those who carry them out. By placing this problem in the foreground, the student movement has shown that this point of the revolutionary program, representing the most radical content of socialism, is the only valid reply to the contradictions of modern societies.

II. *The Faculty*

1) The Faculty is not an independent institution consecrated to the elaboration and transmission of a knowledge for its own sake. A society like ours, which can subsist only by striving ceaselessly for the complete integration of all its functions, cannot maintain within itself a zone of free knowledge and free expression. The Faculty is at the center of two grand operations directed at the means of understanding and expression: their defusing and their recuperation. Their defusing is the Faculty of Dead Letters; their recuperation, the Faculty of Human Relations. In the first case, intelligence and inventiveness are subverted from practice toward fetishism of the finished work, of the past, of what is established; in the second case, these qualities are employed to condition the work force, to increase its efficiency. Defusing creates erudition, recuperation expertise. All the imagination of which the ruling class is capable can go no further than this: to arrange for the Faculty to produce experts rather than esthetes. . . .

2) Not only are the means of understanding and expression reserved to a few; *by this very fact* they cease to be means of comprehension and creation, they become a culture which is separated, barricaded behind pure enjoyment or efficiency, denatured. It is a fact that expression and understanding are most often doomed to find their field of development outside the University. It would be vain to democratize admission to the University if the alienation of the spirit which reigns within its walls were to remain intact. The Faculty must become the smithy of tools and works.

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3) The University will not indeed be revolutionary; all that we do and will do can always be recuperated by the ruling powers so long as the whole of society has not been reconstructed. Yet the task to be accomplished within the Faculty is not vulgarly reformist. We must impose institutions and modes of teaching and research that permit critical understanding of reality in all its forms and liberation of the power of expression. We must not let the reform be made by the existing powers and their allies, middle-of-the-road students and teachers: they would not accomplish anything at all, and by their failure we would once again be faced with the preexisting University conditions. Between the critique of a University judged wrong because it is *unadapted* to the demands of modern capitalism and the critique of a University which would be wrong precisely because *adapted* to these demands, the distinction would not always be made, and the revolutionary critique would become confused with reformism. The movement would be led to close itself off within the University, instead of fighting side by side with the workers. Essentially, it would be recuperated.

4) In attacking not only political oppression and socioeconomic exploitation, but also cultural alienation, the movement has revealed this: that repression is not only a question of police clubs or electoral trickery, nor even exclusively a question of pressures on salaries and work outputs, but that it permeates the content and forms of culture, what the ruling class diffuses through television, press, vacation clubs, organized tours, films, periodicals, as well as university culture. In particular, it appears that repressive systems operate at the heart of the cultural relationship (in the first examples above: distributor/cultural product/consumer; in the last: teachers/knowledge/students) — systems which are more primitive and basic than those of class society, and which nourish the newer forms of repression. The drama of desire and its repression, anxiety and the reflexive search for security — here is the silent mechanism which the managerial classes play upon more and more openly to maintain their domination, and here is the level to which our critique must pierce in order to be true. The truth is what transforms; it alone is revolutionary; with it alone there can be no compromise. We must try to be the wound of truth in the side of alienation.

5) We must keep open and available to the critical consciousness,

2 On this conception of the relation between teacher and taught, and the relation of both to knowledge, see Paul Ricoeur, "Réforme et révolution dans l'université," which originally appeared in *Le Monde* in early June and has been reprinted in *Esprit*, No. 6-7 (June-July, 1968). Ricoeur is Professor of Philosophy at Nanterre.

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the pedagogical triangle in its fullness.[2] The dynamic between teacher and taught must be permanently preserved from retrogression into the old hierarchical relation of master and disciple, and from the demagogy of a symmetry between teacher and taught, or the transformation of the former into a simple expert-counselor. Knowledge must also ceaselessly be rescued from falling into the status of a thing known; its compartmentalization (in departments or fields of specialization within the Faculty, for example) must be thrown into question; its ultimate goal must be under constant suspicion. In this society, knowledge is ever compromised by power.

6) May those who fear the "politicization" of instruction and wish for "serious work" to be possible in this Faculty be entirely reassured: we too fear the politicization of the University by Fouchet or Ortoli,[3] we too want to pursue true work, that is, the work of the truth. We have no catechism to make others recite, no dogma to insinuate, no conviction to suggest. We desire that in all the seminars, workshops, committees of this Faculty be raised and debated the questions which are posed to Humanity.

(*Translated from the French by Peter Brooks*)

CHICAGO:*

An Appeal to the Troops

We know that you're here under orders.

Maybe you want to know why *WE'RE* here.

We're here because we — the entire American people — were double-crossed in 1964 by an Administration that promised peace and practiced war. We're here to say that the Johnson Administration has no right to perpetuate itself.

We have exercised our Constitutional right of free assembly for

3 Respectively, Ministers of the Interior and of Education when this report was written.

* See page 529.

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years, all across this country, in front of fancy hotels — the Waldorf, the Beverly Wilshire, the Conrad Hilton — where the men who rule this country wine and dine and plot their deeds of death.

It was only when we came to Chicago, the world capital of crime, that we were denied our rights at gunpoint. It's up to you, now, not to let American democracy go down the drain. (You six-monthers sensed the war was rotten and futile; you US's and RA's have seen for yourselves). It's up to you to let us stand in front of the Amphitheater.

We are not going to charge the delegates (we don't have the instruments of force and aren't going to use force). But we insist on our right to stand witness against this evil deed — the abandonment of the peace plank and the nomination of Lyndon Johnson's flunky.

To the Police

Our argument in Chicago is not with you.

We have come to confront the rich men of power who ordered America into a war she voted against . . . The men who have brought our country to the point where the police can no longer serve and protect the people — only themselves.

We know you're underpaid.

We know you have to buy your own uniforms.

You often get the blame and rarely get the credit in day-in day-out situations.

Now you're on 12-hour shifts and not being paid overtime.

You should realize we aren't the ones who created the terrible conditions in which you work. This nightmare-week was arranged by Richard Daley and Lyndon Johnson, who decided we shouldn't have the right to express ourselves as free people.

We understand — and you should, too — that you are simply the servants of Daley and Johnson.

Our prayer is for the day when you can again become the servants — no, the friends — of the people.

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As we march, as we stand before the Amphitheater, we will be looking forward to the day when your job is easier, when you can perform your traditional tasks, and no one orders you to deprive your fellow Americans of their rights of free speech and assembly.

WHY SOCIOLOGISTS?

The question of openings in the field of sociology (and psychology) arises often enough to justify its careful consideration.

Two facts are immediately evident. Departments in the social sciences are overcrowded in relation to the openings available at the present time, and this is true even if we allow for a high rate of failures at the time of the examinations. This uncertainty on the part of students with regard to future employment has its counterpart in a theoretical uncertainty on the professorial level, where invocations to science serve merely to make more apparent, by contrast, the confusion in the various doctrines taught.

Moreover, the unrest that has developed since 1960 in the universities here and in other countries has been characteristic of sociologists to an even greater degree than psychologists or philosophers (as was the case after 1945), while the other liberal arts departments, not to mention the sciences, were often characterized by a remarkable passivity. Thus the problems of the university, and even of the society as a whole, have been raised in new departments which have few members; while no less paradoxically, the initiative for the Fouchet reform came from the much more placid scientific quarters.

This phenomenon has been observed in the United States, France and Germany, but also in Poland and Czechoslovakia.

Why does the malaise in these countries choose to express itself in departments of the social sciences?

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE: *Why Sociologists?* was written by the students who led the demonstrations of the last day for a "*Université Critique,*" and was distributed at Nanterre in early April. The authors asked *L'Esprit,* in which the French text appeared, to state that what follows is a provisional text, prepared as a preliminary to discussion.

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Why are they in such a state of ferment, while other departments do nothing, at best, but follow their example?

Why the theoretical uncertainty, and why is there such a problem about job opportunities?

A Short History of Sociology

For our present purposes we shall consider only dominant trends which must await a more detailed study for completion: *all boycotting of classes on this subject will be welcome.*

The problem must be approached from an historical point of view. In this respect the key date is 1930, the period of Mayo's experiment at Hawthorne in the United States.

When Mayo demonstrated the importance of affective phenomena in limited groups and suggested the concept of regulating human relations to improve the productivity of workers, he did much more than open up new terrain for sociology. He ended the era of social philosophy and of speculative systems which embraced society as a whole and ushered in the glorious age of empiricism and of the "scientific" collecting of data.

Similarly, in hiring out his services to the management of a business, he was initiating a period of large-scale collaboration between sociologists and all the powers of the bourgeois world, which were struggling to rationalize a capitalist system that had been profoundly shaken by the crisis of 1929.

The transition from an academic sociology which was the vassal of philosophy to an independent sociology with scientific pretentions corresponds to the transition from competitive capitalism to organized capitalism.

Henceforth the inspiration of sociology will always be more responsive to the social demand for a rationalist practice to serve bourgeois ends: money, profit, the maintenance of order.

Evidence abounds. Industrial sociology seeks above all the adjustment of the worker to his job. The possibility of any other approach is limited, since the sociologist who receives a salary from management must respect the goal of the economic system: to produce as much as possible in order to make as much money as possible. Political sociology advocates vast research projects, usually propagandistic, which are based on the assumption that the electoral choice is today the arena of politics, without ever considering whether politics might not be located elsewhere. Stouffer studies the best conditions for the "morale" of the American soldier without raising the fundamental questions about the

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role of the army in the society in which he lives. One encounters sociologists in advertising — those thousands of forms of conditioning to which the consumer is subjected — and in the experimental study of media, here too, without attempting to criticize the social function of these media, etc.

And what is the attitude of American sociologists toward the central problem of social classes? The concept of class and the concept of discontinuity (class struggle) have been eliminated and replaced by notions of classes and strata endowed with status, power and prestige. Society has become a ladder on which each rung represents a definite quantity of power and prestige, the quantities increasing proportionately as you get closer to the top. Of course, each individual starts out with the same opportunities to climb up the pyramid, since we are living (who isn't?) in a democracy.

Besides the theoretical refutations of Mills and Riesman, the practical refutations of the American subproletariat (ethnic minorities) and the complaints of certain labor groups against their unions suffice to dispel the illusion that integration has been achieved.

Quite recently, the riots of the American black people have aroused so much fear that additional funds have been appropriated to sociologists so that they can study the movements of crowds and provide formulas for repression (this was reported in *Le Monde*).

Finally, with bitter irony, when the Secretary of Defense was launching an antisubversive program in Latin America (the famous Camelot project) but trying to conceal it, he could think of no better disguise than to label it a "sociological" study program. . . .

And what about France?

On the theoretical level the rationalization of capitalism certainly dates back to the postwar period, but it became effective only with Gaullism and its authoritarian structures. And it is no accident that a university degree in sociology was established in 1958. The disparity in development between French capitalism and American capitalism is echoed in the field of ideas. All our contemporary sociology is imported from across the Atlantic a few years after the fact; and everyone knows that the most highly regarded sociologists are those who most attentively follow the American publications.

Sociological "Theory"

We have seen the close relationship of sociology to social demand. The concrete organization of capitalism gives rise to a mass of contradictions, and for each one of these a sociologist is put to work. One is

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assigned to study juvenile delinquency, another racism, a third slums. Each will seek an explanation for his partial problem, develop a thesis, and propose solutions for the limited area of conflict he is studying. Even as he performs the function of watchdog, our sociologist will also be contributing to the mosaic of sociological "theories".

The confusion of the social sciences which has its source here is manifested in the "interdisciplinary" study which is so fashionable today (cf. Althusser). The uncertainty of the individual specialist, when it encounters the uncertainties of other specialists, can only result in broad platitudes.

Behind this confusion there is the never emphasized lack of theoretical status for sociology and the social sciences. In the last analysis, their only meeting ground is that they claim to constitute "broadly speaking, methodical techniques for social adjustment and readjustment," not to mention the reintegration of all dissent: the majority of our sociologists are "Marxists." In support of this thesis let us mention the conservative nature of the concepts utilized presently: hierarchy, ritual, integration, social function, social control, equilibrium, etc. . . .

The "theoreticians" must explain localized conflicts without reference to the social totality that has given rise to them.

This allegedly objective procedure implies an incomplete and biased approach in which the phenomena are not interrelated (though racism, unemployment, juvenile delinquency, slums constitute a totality) and in which the rationality of the economic system is never questioned. Since the word profit has fallen into disrepute, reference is made to growth, to adjustment to change, exalted to a sacred power. But where is this change going, where does it come from, who is organizing it, whom does it profit? Are these questions too speculative to be of interest to science?

These considerations lead us to conclude simply that the malaise of students in sociology may be understood only if we question sociology about its function in society. It is apparent that in the current conflicts the sociologists have chosen their side, that of business management and of the state which assists them. Under these circumstances, what is the significance of the defense of sociology which certain people demand?

Nanterre

The general analysis given above throws light on the particular case of Nanterre. Here, again, we encounter the pattern: crisis in sociology, anxiety about job opportunities, confusion in the instruction offered, and importation of doctrines "Made in U. S. A." Those who remain outside

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the positivist-empiricist stream are forced to fall back upon verbal criticism, which has the merit of avoiding total "one-dimensionalization," but which only confirms their isolation and ineffectiveness.

Among the "white hopes" of French sociology, Parsonian jargon and the cult of statistics (at last, the solid ground of science!) are the key to all problems. The study of society has performed the incredible feat of depoliticizing all instruction — in other words, of legalizing the existing politics. And all this is combined with a fruitful collaboration with government officials and technocrats looking for personnel, etc. Our professors easily pass for "leftists" compared with the antiquarians and curio collectors who flourish in the other departments. The point is that the latter are reluctant to leave the mandarinate of the university established by liberal capitalism, whereas the sociologists have sensed the direction of the "change": *organization, rationalization, production of human merchandise tailormade to suit the economic needs of organized capitalism.*

Here it is necessary to refute some conceptions supported by M. Crozier (*Esprit,* January, 1968) and A. Touraine (articles in *Le Monde*) on the issues which concern us.

For Crozier the source of the American malaise is not, as some naïve persons believe from the violence, the militancy of the black people who have been pushed to the limit by their living conditions, or the horror of the imperialist war in Vietnam (that "accident," that "madness," to quote Crozier, who seemed to be more committed to scientific explanation than to magical words). Nor does it lie, according to Crozier, in the collapse of values, the fact that all values are giving way before the value of exchange, money. No, all this exists, but it is only the surface. Violence has always existed in the United States. What is new, Crozier tells us, is the invasion of rationalism. It is the change in thinking necessary for people to become familiar with the "world of abstract reasoning." Current history is not a real struggle between social groups fighting over material interests and various socio-economic priorities, Crozier tells us. It is the place where two phantasmagorical entities confront each other: rationalism in the service of growth and the irresponsible anarchy of those frightened by the change. This "sociological" vision would hardly be worth refuting were it not for the ideological significance that it might acquire, since Crozier also recommends to the blacks not demands for power but "an intellectual mutation" (sic!), and since all this culminates in the Great Celebration of the American Way of Life, which produces today new individualities which are inventive and dynamic.

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In his recent articles Touraine has presented the following idea: There is a university system whose function is to produce knowledge in order to serve growth (again!), and this system contains a contradiction fertile for change among students and professors. The university is analogous, in its conflicts and in its essential social function, to the business enterprise of the nineteenth century, Touraine says.

But this comparison of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is fallacious. It is not true that "knowledge and technological progress are the moving forces of the new society." Knowledge and technological progress in the new society are subordinated to competition among firms for profit (or for the monopolistic hegemony, which amounts to the same thing) and to the military and economic confrontation between the countries of the East and the West. Scientists are not the innocent entrepreneurs we are asked to believe they are, nor is science this glorious autonomous activity whose only goal is its own development.

The university as a unit of reference is not viable. The contradictions occur on the level of the society as a whole, and the university participates in these contradictions almost unanimously. The majority of professors and students are committed to the preservation of order and only a minority can take part in the confrontation that is occurring in the large cities and the exploited countries. The recent gesture of groups of students here in Nanterre aligning themselves, without disgust at their own servility, with the administration and the majority of the teaching body, is only the most recent evidence of this truth.

Possibilities and Limitations of the Student Confrontation

We must dissipate the illusion, created by Stalinist and Tourainian slogans, of a mass student movement with convergent interests. By their social origin as by their willingness to become salaried employes of various authoritarian machines (government, business, advertising agency, etc.), the majority of students are already conservative.

Only a minority of students and professors (especially assistants) can choose and actually do choose another orientation. What, then, are the possibilities for action for this minority?

In the university milieu the prospects are limited. Essentially, it is a question of enlightening the students regarding the social function of the university. Particularly in sociology, it is necessary to expose the false issues, explain the generally repressive function of the career of sociologist, and dispel the illusions on this subject.

The hypocrisy of objectivity (see Bourricaud, the cultural conscience of the Department of Education), of apoliticism, of innocent

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study, is much more flagrant in the social sciences than elsewhere, and must be revealed.

An intellectual minority remains totally ineffective if it accepts or even enjoys the ghetto to which it has been consigned.

While awaiting other actions, we shall carry this debate to the conference in "defense" of sociologists which is to take place before Easter.

To be continued. . . .

Dany Cohn-Bendit
Jean-Pierre Duteuil
Bertrand Gerard
Bernard Granautier

(Translated from the French.)

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POEMS

A. D. Hope

SONNETS TO BAUDELAIRE

VIII

That was one view of Woman I cannot share.
The wound was self-inflicted, I recall,
You suffered, but was there any need at all
For all that martyrdom, horror and despair?
I think you did not fool yourself. You knew
Woman was your laboratory; your delight,
Stretched by that frightful female in the night,
Was a pure scientist's pleasure in the New.

Much worse of course, than your grand tour of Hell
Are the ideals, the sisters of your choice,
Statues in sugar on their pedestals,
Your hymns *à l'ange, à l'idole immortelle!*
Thank God at times you heard the deep that calls
To the great deep, Love's unmistakable voice.

VIII Les Fleurs du Mal: *Une Nuit que j'étais près d'una affreuse Juive.*
Hymne.
L'Invitation au Voyage.

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IX

The voyage we do not take to the unknown
Becomes the poem that visits us instead.
Its metaphor: two lovers in a bed
Lost to the flesh, exploring towards the bone.
Though one is underneath and one above,
They are one body, one motion and one breath,
Where each caress becomes an act of faith
And every simile an act of love.

Here you struck truth; here you divined a need
In every man, in every woman too
To bare the bone of their necessity,
Give all, hold nothing back, to break, to bleed.
Isolde does the thing she has to do
And drinks and casts the cup into the sea.

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X

You saw it rise, I see it set, that sun,
The bright aubade, the serenade's dying fall,
Between us, brother, we have seen it all.
What was it worth, now all is said and done,
The great Romantic theme: *My heart laid bare?*
One thing, like Ozymandias, they forgot:
To make it worth the trouble, someone must care

To watch Narcissus give himself a hug
Or Onan practise on his magic flute.
Now as the stars light up, for better or worse
Time throws away the key that locked those smug
Museums of self-regard, the universe
Expands, but something's slimy underfoot.

X Les Epaves: *Le Coucher du Soleil Romantique.*

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XI

Your ancient, unknown author asks: What can
Match that man's joy who drinks the man-made wine,
Except a deeper ecstasy, the divine
Joy of the wine to feel itself made man?
Thus poets see Nature's temple, less a place
Of living pillars where all things correspond,
Than one where each world knows a world beyond
And all things yearn for that supreme embrace.

All things solicit the poet for his art
To change dumb being into sentient wine;
Flowers turn their faces, stones implore his feet.
Drunk with those lives, he reels toward the sign
Where, in his turn, the secular paraclete
Cries: Drink, engulf me, let me feel my heart.

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XII

Crénom! your last word, as it could be mine,
(It shocked those pious sisters in the ward)
Speech, Poetry, the Holy Name, the Word,
Became a grunt, last human act and sign.
What of it? The butt-end of a harmless oath
Showed, like the glint of your still living eyes,
Not Life, not Death had taken you by surprise:
With love and irony you met them both.

Women you had loved stood smiling by your bed;
Crénom! you sighed: it was the last caress.
They played you Wagner and again a blurred
Crénom! came like an echo from the Dead.
Crénom! Name, number, the creating word
Utters the heart's unhesitating: Yes!

XII Baudelaire: Collection Genies et Réalités, Hachette, Paris, 1961, pp. 262-265.

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Harold Bloom

VISIONARY CINEMA

The inventor of my subject is, not surprisingly, Eisenstein, who wrote with insight on the cinematic elements in Milton and Shelley. I want to deviate from Eisenstein's concern a little, and I choose my motto from a poem of Wallace Stevens, *The Creations of Sound.* Speaking of one "x," a poet I take to have been Eliot, Stevens says of his poems, in courteous but firm disapproval: "They do not make the visible a little hard to see." Blake, Wordsworth and Shelley meant somewhat different things by vision, and their intentions in this matter were certainly not identical, but they all of them, in their poems, do tend to make the visible a little hard to see.

Critics have noted, during these last decades, the apparent conflict between theory and performance in this regard, in these poets, particularly in Wordsworth. Blake seems just as odd when one starts to know him well. "General Knowledge," he insisted, "is Remote Knowledge. It is in Particulars that Wisdom consists & Happiness too. Both in Art & Life General Masses are as Much Art as a Pasteboard Man is Human."

An experienced reader of Blake's major poems, his epics, learns to set aside the very early impression that there is anything cloudy or indefinite about the figures or actions in those poems. Yet there is a subtler problem in visualization that presents itself everywhere in Blake's poetry at its most characteristic; Blake invites the reader's ocular powers to the enjoyment of a dangerous freedom, dangerous I think not to Blake as a poet, but certainly to Blake as a visual artist and critically somewhat dangerous to the reader. I read one of the most eloquent descriptive passages in the language; I stare, disbelievingly, at an inadequate engraved illumination and then I try, too strenuously, to isolate an image that Blake, as a poet, knew better than to isolate. Blake, I think, like his master Milton (as Eisenstein hinted) wants us to be more of a film–

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script reader or even a director than a film-viewer. He wants us to hear the fierce arguments between his Giant Forms, and he wants how we hear those disputes to waver depending upon our own states of being. And he wants us to see the transformations in his ruined worlds, but how we see and even at times what we see will depend upon the self-purging of our own eyes. Blake suggests a principle that I have seen applied only at scattered moments in a handful of films, one that might be called both auditory and visual counterpoint. The Urizen in us is meant to see one thing, the suffering Tharmas another and so on down that sorrowing cast of internalized Titans.

There is an equivalent or parallel point-counterpoint in Wordsworth, a cinematic dialectic in which natural sight and sound reach their horizon and blend into a seeing and hearing of processes that cannot, in mere nature, be seen and heard. To Blake, Wordsworth's visionary cinema seemed not a counterpoint but a movingly fragmented single voice, the voice of Tharmas, a splintered but still visual, still instinctual unity, quaveringly seeking his harmony again in a context that could never afford him such harmony. But Wordsworth makes his blendings work, and invents the modern crisis poem by doing so. That a strictly controlled synesthesia should have been the mark, not of disaster, but of salvation in the Coleridgean-Wordsworthian crisis poem, is of peculiar importance in understanding how the Romantics suggest a more imaginative cinema than we can see in our theaters.

Shelley is the crucial case, and it is impossible for me to be original here, because of Eisenstein's brilliant commentary on visual detail in Shelley's lyricism. Shelley, as always, is an imaginative extremist, and does not deal in visual or auditory counterpoint as do Blake and Wordsworth. His desire is to make the visible almost impossible to see, and his cinema is too visionary for any techniques devised in our time to encompass. The sight or sound too keen for more than a flash of apprehension is the staple of his imagination, and seems to suggest the art of the lighting expert or of the sound-effects specialist more than that of the film creator. But, at his greatest moments, Shelley earns his assignment to Phase 17 of Yeats's *A Vision,* one of the *daemonic* men whose Body of Fate is "Loss." Where Blake struggles to *see* an imaginative gain, and Wordsworth to *hear* the conversion of experiential loss into such gain, Shelley sees, hears and describes imaginative loss. The dissolving of sight is given us, by him, as a presage of a greater fading of integrity, a yielding of every natural particular to what he ironically terms the Triumph of Life.

Keats is not primarily the creator of a visionary cinema, though *Endymion* acts itself out before us as a dissolving series of visions, and

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The Fall of Hyperion stations its scene and figures with a monumental sense of visual possibility that transcends what is ordinarily visible. A feeling for the weight of things, and a deliberate pacing, too slow for the impatience of the eye, combine to render Keats a maker poised before things-in-their-greeting, even as Blake, Wordsworth and Shelley, in different ways, deal with things-in-their-farewell. Keats is nevertheless more than a naturalistic artist, however heroically we conceive his naturalism; like the other major Romantics, though to a lesser extent, he was, despite his yearnings, a Miltonic poet, and the central principle that organizes his art is not a particularly dramatic one. If *To Autumn* is rightly accounted his masterpiece, it presents us with a scenario of, first, an enacted process too slow for the eye to see; secondly, a sight so ambiguously blended that we cannot know for sure whether we love landscape or woman; thirdly, a series of sounds, of autumnal music, that inevitably betoken death by their gentle tentativeness. Blake would have had no quarrel with the ode *To Autumn;* it gives firm outline, but spiritual as opposed to corporeal form.

I propose to sketch the rough outlines of a visionary cinema in Blake, Wordsworth and Shelley, not in order to cast any illumination upon the nature of any more pragmatic cinema we already know, and not much in the hope that a study of poetry will ever make any particular cinematic artist any more gifted in his work.

The burden of Romantic poetry is absolute freedom, including freedom from the tyranny of the bodily eye, and this freedom appears to have resulted in part from the specifically Protestant influence that made modern poetry possible. When Wordsworth seeks the middle passage between the sensual, sleeping the sleep of death in their vacancy and vanity, and the ascetics, studying their nostalgias and insisting that all earthly paradises have been lost, he is presumably not immediately conscious that he seeks what radical Protestantism so frequently sought, a renewal of the Biblical program of hallowing the commonplace. It takes a while to realize that this Wordsworthian hallowing is not enacted through the eye. Wordsworth would rouse us from sleep by words, he says, that speak of nothing more than what we *are*, rather than of nothing more than what we *see*. Who could have thought, Stevens asks, in one of his more explicitly humanist declarations — who could have thought to make, out of what one sees and what one hears, so many separate selves. Wordsworth was too aware that his freedom was precarious to make so trusting a statement. In him the Christian Liberty of Milton had become what it nearly became in Coleridge, the power of the mind over a universe of death.

Christian Liberty, as a doctrine, led to Milton's conception of a

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sect of one (Abdiel), a church of one (himself). He appealed to the holy light to shine inward, and created English Romanticism by doing so. The implicit distrust of the visible in Blake and Wordsworth, in particular, has some relation to Milton's blindness, for Milton is the greatest visionary poet in the English language, as Isabel McCaffrey remarks. He yearns, most movingly, for the visible, but he does not need it, and its absence became one of the greatest of his astonishing panoply of strengths.

There is, I think, a profound sense in which poetry *is* antithetical to cinema, an opinion expressed rather strongly by Valéry. My concern here is not to say anything about the nature of cinema, but to apply the principle of Borges: that artists create their own precursors, and force us to read the precursors differently. Art forms do the same, and the consciousness of films compels us to read past poetry differently. That this difference is sometimes loss is beyond dispute; *Paradise Lost* has yielded some of its primary excitement to our cinematic experiences. But, if controlled, the difference becomes gain, becomes indeed another working of Wordsworth's compensatory imagination. I want, in this investigation, to bring a critical eye conditioned by cinema freshly to bear upon Blake's visionary procedure, and Wordsworth's and Shelley's. Somewhere along the roads that led from the major Romantics to our poets who matter most — to Stevens and Hart Crane particularly — the distrust of the merely visible dissipated. One wants so badly for Tennyson to have freed his inner eye, to have yielded himself to the phantasmagoria that was his truest mode. Browning, particularly in the greatest of his lyrics, "Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came," does yield momentously to vision, and renews something of the Romantic freedom. Stevens hesitates, endlessly, at the verge of that freedom. But, to this day, for a full-scale emancipation from a mere appearance of objects, we need to go back to the founders of modern poetry, to Blake and to Wordsworth.

If I ask myself what I remember most vividly, at all times, about Blake's three long poems — *The Four Zoas, Milton* and *Jerusalem* — the answer is always argument — passionate, beautiful argument between mutually tormented consciousnesses — and never actions or sights as such. But Blake does more than make us hear these arguments; he stations the disputants in a context informed by conceptual images, images that either poise themselves just within the visible, or compel a new kind of visibility to appear. From their starts, his long poems refuse to seek the visually remembered world. Even Wordsworth, of course, is found not by the visually remembered world, but by that world taken up into the mind, and seen again by the eye of the mind, as Geoffrey Hartman insists.

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Blake shatters this blending with a single insistence; as he does not behold the outward creation, so he can affirm for himself that his Giant Forms are stationed in no remembered landscape, but only in the visionary finding of his own pulsation of an artery, that moment in each day that Satan's Watch-Fiends cannot find.

At the end of "Night the Fourth" of *The Four Zoas,* the Giant Form named Los, who will at last compel an imaginative salvation, wearies of the terrible task of hammering the falling Urizen into some kind of definite shape. Himself a malformed Imagination, Los, the affrighted Titan, at this point cannot bear the consequences of his own necessary labor. Instead of the heroic stance of the artificer before his own free creation, we are given the wavering of an enforced illusionist who "became what he beheld / He became what he was doing he was himself transformed." The final lines of "Night the Fourth" read

> *The bones of Urizen hurtle on the wind the bones of Los*
> *Twinge and his iron sinews bend like lead and fold*
> *Into unusual forms dancing and howling stamping the Abyss.*

This vehement grotesquerie seems, at first, only an instance of what Blake's friend Fuseli charmingly called "Meester Blake's emancipated anatomy," prompting those Blakean manuscript sketches that impress our skepticism as being only so many flying geeks. But the rhetoric this vision emancipates in Blake at the very start of the next book, "Night the Fifth," is monumentally impressive by any standards. This is the *totentanz* of Los:

> *Infected Mad he danced on his mountains high & dark as heaven*
> *Now fixd into one steadfast bulk his features stonify*
> *From his mouth curses & from his eyes sparks of blighting*
> *Beside the anvil cold he dancd with the hammer of Urthona*
> *Terrific pale. Enitharmon stretchd on the drears Earth*
> *Felt her immortal limbs freeze stiffning pale inflexible*
> *His feet shrunk withring from the deep shrinking & withering*
> *And Enitharmon shrunk up all their fibres withring beneath*
> *As plants witherd by winter leaves & stems & roots decaying*
> *Melt into thin air while the seed drivn by the furious wind*
> *Rests on the distant Mountains top. So Los & Enitharmon*
> *Shrunk into fixed space stood trembling on a Rocky cliff*
> *Yet mighty bulk & majesty & beauty remaind but unexpansive*
> *As far as highest Zenith from the lowest Nadir. So far shrunk*
> *Los from the furnaces a Space immense & left the cold*
> *Prince of Light bound in chains of intellect among the furnaces*
> *But all the furnaces were out & the bellows had ceast to blow*

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He stood trembling & Enitharmon clung around his knees
Their senses unexpansive in one stedfast bulk remain
The night blew cold & Enitharmon shriekd on the dismal wind

Her pale hands cling around her husband & over her weak head
Shadows of Eternal Death sit in the leaden air

But the soft pipe the flute the viol organ harp & cymbal
And the sweet sound of silver voices calm the weary couch
Of Enitharmon but her groans drown the immortal harps
Loud & more loud the living music floats upon the air
Faint & more faint the daylight wanes. The wheels of turning darkness
Began in solemn revolutions. Earth convulsd with rending pangs
Rockd to & from & cried sore at the groans of Enitharmon
Still the faint harps & silver voices calm the weary couch
But from the caves of deepest night ascending in clouds of mist
The winter spread his wide black wings across from pole to pole
Grim frost beneath & terrible snow linkd in a marriage chain
Began a dismal dance. The winds around on pointed rocks
Settled like bats innumerable ready to fly abroad

If Wordsworth's method, as Pottle remarked, was one of transfiguration, then Blake's, in this terrific passage, seems to be poised between the phantasmagoria of the surrealists, and the massive and detailed visionary realism of Milton. The matter of common perception is wholly absent here; no descriptive detail awaits transfiguration. Yet the greatness of the passage does not dwell only in its carrying-over of the Miltonic sublime into a conceptualized night-world. Like every major passage in Blake, it is polemical, and it fights not only the technologists and materialists of Blake's own time, but also the servants of Urizen who abound in our new technological dreariness. To explore the dens of Urizen is to come to terms with a fallen world, but to see the irrelevance of that world to the imagination, as Blake does in the passage that I've quoted, is to see what an intellectual fighter must see, if he believes, as Blake did, that the Eternal Great Humanity Divine can tear Himself free from any local, time-bound accidents of context, whether the context be provided by nature, or by the technological extensions of nature. For Blake, as for Wordsworth and Shelley, there are no extensions of man; there are only more humanized or less humanized men. Explorations that are not apocalyptic are, to Blake, exploitations; they lead to religions of concealment. The passage I have quoted from Blake is about the completion of the Fall of Man, which is made final when the imagination accepts unnecessary limitations. The terror felt by Los is

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founded on his stupidity; he cannot see that the hammering of error into definite shape, however repugnant, will lead to salvation. The great description of the dance of Los founds its irony on visionary counterpoint; the imagination is accepting a naturalization that is wholly unnecessary; it is yielding itself to the context of space. But it is recalcitrant to that context, and the landscape cannot hold it. With an eye made active by an awareness of cinema, we see what Blake gives us in his passage: a series of shifting views that are not in continuity with one another, and whose juxtapositions suggest an intolerable confusion between an inward world rolling outward and an outward world that stands apart, and is objectified as a mockery of our visual powers. Los is "Infected" because he is becoming what he beheld in the changes of Urizen; he is "Mad" because he cannot bear such transformations in himself. He dances "on his mountains," which are truly his, for they are forsaken elements of his own self. In the earth of Eden, before the Fall, the Imagination dwelt in underground caves, which were the auricular nerves of man, and identical with the apocalyptic sense of hearing. In Blake, the Fall turns everything inside out; the stonified ears have become the mountains on which the deafened Los dances. We see, in succession, but again without continuity, the following images: a mad Titan dancing on mountains as high and dark as an inhuman heaven; then a steadfast bulk, a horror of natural sculpture, with stony features, a cursing mouth and eyes from which sparks of blighting come at us. Next we see the dancer again, but he is pale, and dances beside a cold anvil, ironically brandishing the now useless hammer of Urthona, his name in Eternity. The next shot shows us his female, emanative portion, Enitharmon, stretched on a denuded earth, and freezing and stiffening into that ground of unbeing. In the eye of vision we suddenly see both figures shrinking and withering from the feet up, and immediately the next frame shows us two plants withered by winter, uprooted, decaying and then dissolving in a furious wind, that carries the unseen seeds to a distant mountain top. We see the two more than human figures again, still mighty in bulk and majesty and beauty, but curiously confined-looking, and then a shot of the cold furnaces and unused bellows is given us. The two figures tremble on a cliff at the edge of an abyss, the female clinging round Los's knees. The wind blows, and we hear her shriek; there is a chorus of soft instruments and silvery voices, but she shrieks louder to drown it out as the daylight wanes. The darkness comes in the shapes of the turning wheels of giant mills, as though industrial specters were planted in the skies, and the earth responds to the dread

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revolutions of those dark wheels by rocking to and fro, convulsed in the rending pangs of some enormous childbirth. As Enitharmon groans again, the music of comfort attempts to return:

But from the caves of deepest night ascending in clouds of mist
The winter spreads his wide black wings across from pole to pole
Grim frost beneath & terrible snow linkd in a marriage chain
Began a dismal dance. The winds around on pointed rocks
Settled like bats innumerable ready to fly abroad——

I have requoted these last five lines because their visionary power is so intense. Here, the winter wind is an enormous bat flying over the frozen chain of Jealousy that symbolizes all fallen marriage for Blake, and the dance of the weather completes Los's dance of death. Beneath the black bat and the white chain there now comes rending forth, out of the earth, the crimson form of natural man in revolt, the hellish figure of Orc, Rousseau's dream of man become a nightmare of revolt and unrestrained violence. A ghastly decomposition in layers of black, white and red ends a scene that began with a maddened but still titanically heroic figure dancing itself on, through a frenzy of incomprehension, into its own destruction. The ear has heard a blowing wind, a silvery music too soft to endure and a female howling in pangs of childbirth. The eye has seen human forms vacillating between stony masses and ruined vegetation, and eye and ear together end with a vision of a howling red child, menacing all of the senses it seeks to release; a vision of natural existence so violent that it can give vision no field in which to continue the labors of salvation.

What Blake has compelled us to see and to hear is not the redemption of physical reality, which Kracauer states as the central thesis of his theory of film, but rather the ocular and aural demonstration that physical reality cannot be redeemed by the arts of the eye and the ear. Uneasily but inevitably, the passage, like every major passage in Blake's mature poetry, makes us confront the abyss of the five senses, makes us realize, in Stevensian terms, the necessity for a violence from within to overcome this violence from without. In the war between the sky and the mind, Blake fights on the mind's side always, and he will resort to no external image for its own sake, but only as yet another index to our Fall. We cannot be saved by images in Blake, and yet the emblem of salvation for Blake remains a central image, the Human Form Divine, a perfect human body stationed in no context but itself, seen against no background but the artifacts it itself has made, but artifacts poised against the created world. What Blake finally wants us to see breaks

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the confines of a possible cinema — a greater human form, male and female together, containing the world *within* it, from the caves of middle-earth to the starry wheels above. To visualize a poem, and a visionary poem at that, is to see what cannot be seen. In the closing lines of *Jerusalem* Blake speaks of what Stevens terms a seeing and unseeing in the eye, as an *identifying* of all human forms. He asks for too much, and perhaps at last we will be condemned to judge him as he judged Milton, a true poet when he wrote of visual torment, but a fettered bard of the absolute when he asked us to go beyond the abyss of the eye. Yet his eternal appeal is in his demand that we must and can do so.

With Wordsworth, we move to a more overt defeat of the eye, though the consequences of the defeat are deliberately mitigated by the poet, in contrast to Blake's grim delight in our apprehension of the defeat of sight by vision. Though Blake might have seen our movie theaters as so many more temples of Urizen, he would have found them demonically relevant, mills of the mind in retreat from the work of creation that might burn up *the* Creation. But to Wordsworth, they would have been merely irrelevant to the inward eye of solitude, which is the eye of his song. As I have chosen what Blake himself termed one of his more "terrific" passages, I take, for contrast, Wordsworth in his eerie, his preternatural *quietness,* showing a strength of being perhaps more primordial, in its effect, than that of any other poet whatsoever. *The Ruined Cottage,* the tragic tale of Margaret, supplies the passages. Where, with Blake, we are rhetorically compelled to know that we are in the presence of a poet's prophetic *power,* here in Wordsworth the rhetoric makes us know the strength of a prophetic *endurance* that only an extraordinarily exalted poet possesses. Blake moves us by a counterpoint that turns on the irony of unnecessary limitations; Wordsworth moves us, possibly more deeply, by a counterpoint that turns on the anti-ironic, on the necessity of a suffering so permanent, obscure and dark that it overcomes its own status as limitation and shares the nature of infinitude. Blake shows us vision collapsing into space and time; Wordsworth shows a spot of time or moment of space that holds vision precariously open to further experience. For Blake the mind is always lord and master, even if the mastery belongs, at times, to Urizen, the writer of the great poem of winter. For Wordsworth, there is always a precise extent and a *howness,* to the mind's mastery, and always therefore an abiding recalcitrance in which outward sense is not only the servant of the mind's will, but has an unsuspended and dangerous will of its own. The tyranny of the eye, that most despotic of our senses, is

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only the most celebrated aspect of this recalcitrance. The tyranny of the ear, which Wordsworth would never acknowledge, subtly imposes itself by the compulsive repetition of the sound of universal waters far inland. Deep in his journey to the interior, Wordsworth is obsessed by the oceanic sense, the waters of judgment rushing all about his ears. It takes a while for the constant reader of Wordsworth to be disheartened by the excessive recurrence of this auricular image, but disheartened one can become. Yet compulsion in Wordsworth *is* strength, whatever it may be in the rest of us, and perhaps it is even, finally, an esthetic strength.

That ruin should come out of the more than natural, the apocalyptic strength of hope and love, is the awful meaning of the tale of Margaret, as harrowing a poem as any of us have read, a warning against the destructive power of the imagination. All through the old man's discourse that is the poem, the eye of the narrative pauses, with a racking slowness, on the outward signs of Margaret's inner self-destruction, and in a way that avoids the tyranny of the camera eye. I quote, in progression, three such passages, torn from their context but forming a unit between them:

> *The sun was sinking in the west and now*
> *I sate with sad impatience. From within*
> *Her solitary infant cried aloud!*
> *The spot though fair seemed very desolate*
> *The longer I remained more desolate.*
> *And looking round I saw the corner stones*
> *Till then unmarked, on either side the door*
> *With dull red stains discoloured, and stuck o'er*
> *With tufts and hairs of wool as if the sheep*
> *That feed upon the commons thither came*
> *As to a couching-place and rubbed their sides*
> *Even at her threshold. The church-clock struck eight,*
> *I turned and saw her distant a few steps.*
> *Her face was pale and thin, her figure too*
> *Was changed. As she unlocked the door she said*
> *'It grieves me you have waited here so long*
> *But in good truth I've wandered much of late.'*

A step further on, and we are given this:

> *I turned towards the garden gate, and saw*
> *More plainly still the poverty and grief*
> *Were now come nearer to her; the earth was hard*
> *With weeds defaced and knots of withered grass;*
> *No ridges there appeared of clear black mould,*
> *No winter greenness. Of her herbs and flowers*
> *It seemed the better part were gnawed away*

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Or trampled on the earth; a chain of straw
Which had been twisted round the tender stem
Of a young apple-tree lay at its root,
The bark was nibbled round by truant sheep.
Margaret stood near, her infant in her arms
And seeing that my eye was on the tree
She said, 'I fear it will be dead and gone
Ere Robert come again.'

And finally, the end, abrupt, and arousing in us that brother's love in which we bless her in the impotence of grief:

Meanwhile her poor hut
Sank to decay, for he was gone, whose hand
At the first nippings of October frost
Closed up each chink, and with fresh bands of straw
Chequered the green-grown thatch. And so she lived
Through the long winter, reckless and alone;
Till this reft house, by frost, and thaw, and rain
Was sapped, and, when she slept, the nightly damps
Did chill her breast, and in the stormy day
Her tattered clothes were ruffled by the wind
Even at the side of her own fire. Yet still
She loved this wretched spot, nor would for worlds
Have parted hence, and still that length of road
And this rude bench one torturing hope endeared,
Fast rooted at her heart; and here, my friend,
In sickness she remained, and here she died,
Last human tenant of these ruined walls."

Three visions of a spot made progressively more wretched by the yearning strength of a hope too willing to be fed, and yet three visions in which the visible is either very hard to see indeed, or else does not yield up to the eye the full purchase it has made upon reality. In the first, the aged narrator sits against a sunset, hears the cry of a solitary infant and stares at the corner stones on either side of the door. He sees a pastoral emblem, but one that shows a falling-away; the discolored stones, with their dull red stains, their tufts and hairs of wool, subtly tell of a collapse from cultivation back to the wild. The red-stained stone is itself a sunset, and the infant's cry of loneliness is another sunset, the three together betokening the twilight figure of Margaret, that lingering sunset whose slow self-destruction is the process that the poem enacts. In the second passage, the old man scrutinizes Margaret's ruined garden, and sees again a series of tokens that only the eye of the mind can link together. Where fixities and definites in the first passage dissolve into

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the sad unity of the pastoral sunset, here they dissolve into the image of a pastoral hunger shared both by the earth and by the wintry sheep. Again the hand of the human is missing, and the wild claims its own — the earth is hard, the withered grass is knotted, the herbs and flowers gnawed away and trampled and the young apple tree gradually dies into its longest winter, its bark nibbled round by the hungry sheep. What the scene speaks of is at the borders of the visible, for the abandonment does not indicate despair, but grimly once again tells of the destructive strength of outrageously sustained hope. It is an instance where Valéry is proved correct, for here the poem is antithetical to its own cinema; what camera eye could gaze upon this scene, and tell us, mutely, that the voice that will rise from this solitude and wilderness will be the voice of a woman transfigured by an infinite hope, and not by a despair?

In the third passage, ending the poem, the torturing hope attains its visionary climax. Nature has been abandoned to apocalyptic yearnings, and it replies as it must, in the killing image of winter. The cottage and the woman fuse together, and both reach the borders of the visible, for the artifact and the human alike slide over into a blending where they are merely vegetal and animal, exposed remnants of nature yielding to natural entropy. The cottage is reft and sapped by frost and thaw and rain, and Margaret is chilled, asleep, by nightly damps and, awake, by a wind that blows by her own fireside. The last *more-than-visual* image is one of dreadful naturalization, even of a Blakean sort; the endearing but torturing hope holds her to the wretched and now deathly spot, "fast rooted at her heart." The final image is purely *visual* — the ruined walls of the cottage, but visual presentation has little to do with the Wordsworthian power of this final image. It is a complex of emotions that falls apart in this abandoned spot, and the falling-apart is truly one of the credences of winter.

We need not puzzle as to why Blake distrusted the merely visual, and insisted on the visionary in its place. But, despite the great line of Wordsworthian critics, from Bradley and Abercrombie through Wilson Knight and Hartman — that alternative contention that has insisted against Arnold that Wordsworth was *not* the poet of future — despite that splendid array the Wordsworthian distrust of the eye remains a partial mystery. Wordsworth, at his very greatest, feared both the outward eye of nature and the inward eye of vision, though the fears never kept him from his courageous assaults upon both modes of seeing. Hartman suggests the influence of Burke on Wordsworth, quoting Burke's notion that the business of poetry "is, to affect rather by sympathy than imitation; to display rather the effect of things on the mind of the speaker,

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or of others, than to present a clear idea of the things themselves." Pottle cites Wordsworth's letter to Landor, where what moves Wordsworth most in poetry is spoken of as that point of vision "where things are lost in each other, and limits vanish, and aspirations are raised." The strength of hope, in Wordsworth as in Margaret, is more than natural, and perhaps the clue to his distrust of the bodily eye is to be found in the apocalyptic power of his hope. His sense of possible sublimity is always with him, and his poetry holds us, ultimately, by our own sense that it will reveal "something evermore about to be." The visible has been, and is, and even its actual sublimity is always a betrayal of its possible grandeur. The spirit of the unvisited haunts Wordsworth, and the unvisited resists even the counterpoint of the visual and the visionary.

Blake lived in apocalyptic hope also, but his response to that hope was unequivocal; the expanding eyes of Man would *see,* and in that revelation the deeps would shrink to their foundations. The blending or dual element in Wordsworth refuses a clarified sight as the gift of revelation; either common sight must suffice or, since it does not, a synesthetic blend of seeing-hearing must return, as once it existed for the young child. And, when this return is doubted or modified, the synesthetic phenomenon, the sober coloring that is also a still, sad music, must yield to hearing alone, as nothing in nature will satisfy the eye that quests for evidences of the mind's excursive power. The things not seen provide the substance of hope, and Wordsworth at last approximates Milton in practicing an art of the eye's abyss, in taking us down to that inward depth where no modern prophet of the eye has followed. An art so deep is a lasting reproof to our cinema, and to ourselves.

My epilogue is in Shelley, who went on until he had stopped eye and ear together. As I have used such melancholy passages of Blake and Wordsworth, I am happy to quote Shelley at his most loving. Here is one of the dazzling passages of his *Epipsychidion,* where he describes, or rather does not describe, the beauty of Emilia Viviani, that soul out of his soul:

> *The glory of her being, issuing thence,*
> *Stains the dead, blank, cold air with a warm shade*
> *Of unentangled intermixture, made*
> *By Love, of light and motion: one intense*
> *Diffusion, one serene Omnipresence,*
> *Whose flowing outlines mingle in the flowing,*
> *Around her cheeks and utmost fingers glowing*

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With the unintermitted blood, which there
Quivers, (as in a fleece of snow-like air
The crimson pulse of living morn may quiver,)
Continuously prolonged, and ending never
Till they are lost, and in that Beauty furled
Which penetrates and clasps and fills the world;
Scarce visible from extreme loveliness.
Warm fragrance seems to fall from her light dress
And her loose hair; and where some heavy tress
The air of her own speed has disentwined,
The sweetness seems to satiate the faint wind;
And in the soul a wild odour is felt,
Beyond the sense.

I don't recall that any actual cinema I've seen does much to make the beauty of a woman a little hard to see. Shelley, unlike Milton, Blake and Wordsworth, both liked and desired women; the three older prophet–poets desired women, but evaded the full portrayal of the total or spiritual form of that desire. Shelley was, intellectually, a ruthless skeptic, as tough-minded as you are, whoever you are. Rhetorically, he was, all critical misrepresentation to the contrary, an urbane ironist, but emotionally he was, to his eternal credit but personal sorrow, a passionate idealist. As an intellectual skeptic, he knows, too well, the narrow limits of both poetry and love; as an ironist he is too cultivated to indulge in the vulgarity of constantly showing us that he knows those limits. As an idealist, he merely keeps falling in love. Put together the skepticism, the urbanity and the idealism, and you leave little reason for any visible appearance to move this poet. Intellectually he doubts that he can know its reality; rhetorically he doubts that it can be expressed with any decorum; and emotionally he doubts that it can satisfy a desire that will not settle for any outermost form whatsoever. Set him the task of describing the visual beauty of his beloved, and you get the extravagant and magnificent passage I've recited to you, not so much a description of a human female as a fireworks display of what Stevens called "lights astral and Shelleyan."

Yet a close inspection of the passage makes us dissatisfied, not with it, but the ways we ordinarily describe a woman's beauty, and even more, with the grossness of the motion picture camera, or its manipulator, when an attempt is made to show us such beauty. "See where she stands!" Shelley cries in exultation, and we try to see. But the glory of her being is not visible in any ordinary sense. We cannot *see* a warmth compounded of light and motion, nor can we see the aura of love surrounding this beauty. And yet, as Shelley's poem knows and shows us,

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phenomenologically just *this* is given to us in the privileged moments of our lives. The problem is to describe a secularized epiphany that cannot be described, but Shelley was a specialist in the indescribable. I don't know the critical technique that would permit *us* to describe accurately just *what* happens in this passage that confronts the idealized Emilia. Confrontation takes place in the second person; all analysis or description takes place in the third. The Intellectual Beauty, a gleam just beyond the range of our senses to apprehend it, gets into this passage, but phenomenologically what counts most is what Shelley beautifully calls "the air of her own speed." The miracle of Shelley's art is in its continual impression of speed. Like the Psalmist, when his soul is uplifted, Shelley in moments of glory moves with a speed that reproves the slow dullness of the ordinarily visible. His nuances are subtler than Blake's or Wordsworth's; too subtle for the outward eye to apprehend, but not too subtle for the awakened spirit seeking, as Yeats said of Shelley, more in this world than any can understand.

The final use of Romantic poetry, or of poetry written in that tradition down to Yeats, Lawrence, Stevens and Crane, is to teach us that we do not know either what our senses, just as they are, can reveal to us, or what can be revealed to us, perfectly naturalistically, and yet seemingly just beyond the range of our senses. All actual cinema that I know, including the rubbish that currently passes for experimental or "new" cinema but seems designed merely to bring on a saving myopia — all cinema yet made has failed in imagination, has absurdly fallen short of the whole esthetic needs of the awakened consciousness of man. One does not ask a film to be a poem; films-as-literature bore, and will go on boring. But one waits for an artist, and an art, to go beyond the relative crudity of what one has been offered. The burden of Romantic poetry, and the true though frequently evaded burden of post-Romantic poetry, is either to offer an apocalypse of the order of physical reality, as in Blake or Shelley or Yeats, or to move us towards that adventure in humanity in which, at last, we would be a race completely physical in a physical world, the dream of Keats and of the colder Stevens after him. Between these fierce alternatives there is the blending vision of Wordsworth, seeking the difficult rightness of a nature "first and last and midst and without end," in which the Characters of the Great Apocalypse could be read in every countenance and on every blossom. No medium has inherent limitations so great that the Imagination cannot overcome them, and no medium is its own message. Films will either become more imaginative, will either achieve their own apocalyptic form, whatever that may be, or they will die, leaving us again with

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those astral and Shelleyan lights that our poetic tradition throws upon us, adding nothing to our reality but themselves, and yet reimagining our lives in that addition. Wallace Stevens, commenting in a letter on one of his own poems, concludes the matter as I would have it concluded: He writes:

> The astral and Shelleyan lights are not going to alter the structure of nature. Apples will always be apples, and whoever is a ploughman hereafter will be what the ploughman has always been. For all that, the astral and the Shelleyan will have transformed the world.

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Robert Garis

THE NEW YORK CITY BALLET

The New York City Ballet is the great theatrical enterprise of our time mainly, of course, because of Balanchine. With him in charge, how could it miss? What other theatrical company's director equals him in taste and theatrical expertise, not even to mention genius? He seems to me, in fact, the greatest artist working today in any field, and since *Agon* in 1957 his fertility and versatility have almost passed belief. But this is a familiar story; it is time to speak about the company in and by itself. Certainly you see Balanchine's hand everywhere in its operation; certainly there is such a thing as a Balanchine style of dancing. But the great dancers at the New York City Ballet who are guided by Balanchine's taste and style are not his puppets or slaves, yet they haven't, probably because of the magnetism of the Balanchine name, been given quite the attention and admiration they deserve.

Almost nobody talks about the difference in style, for instance, between the company's two most exciting women dancers, Violette Verdy and Suzanne Farrell. Let me exaggerate for emphasis: Farrell is a great dancer but Verdy is, in the old-fashioned sense of the word, a great artist. And yet it *is* a difference in style, not in excellence. Even at her wittiest and most outgoing, Verdy is always a conscious interpreter: you are always aware that she has taken thought about all her decisions in timing and phrasing. This impression is normal enough in the other arts but rare in ballet, particularly rare in American ballet. Perhaps this is why we Americans have come to like, some of us almost to require, a dance style in which dancers differ from each other virtually by chance, through physical gifts rather than mental actions: because they carry themselves in special ways, because their bodies make special configurations, because one dancer has exceptional lightness, another exceptional legato, another exceptional brilliance. This

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ideal promotes modesty and naturalness, and inhibits pretentious exhibitionism. But it is exciting to be in continuous contact with a great dancer's conscious intellect, not only with her spontaneous dance instinct; and Verdy proves that this style needn't be either pretentious or unspontaneous.

You can see Verdy's conscious artistry in the way she often accents the beginning of a sequence by accelerating the initial impulse, then retarding, or the other way around. And in a long sequence she guides your eye to particular elements: by lowering her head, for instance, before a lift; or by separating the phrases with little breathing pauses. Now in kind these inflections are standard procedure for a pianist or soprano, but actually Verdy's style is more elaborately inflected than most musicians' and far more than any other ballerina's, and there is the additional, and perhaps more problematic, fact that her inflections are highly visible not only in effect but in mechanism. It took Edwin Denby's unique insight and his own experience as a dancer to explain how Markova achieved some of her effects, but almost anybody who cares about such things can see what Verdy is doing and how, just as anybody can see that she prepares all of her roles with high discipline, conscious art and independent will.

And anybody can feel that she has a wonderfully spontaneous dance intelligence. On this score we have the unusual testimony of Balanchine himself. His hostility to the conception of dancers as "artists" is something we could infer from the general style at the New York City Ballet if we didn't know it from explicit statements and from the recent, rather insulting decision not to list the roster of dancers in the program. But Balanchine went out of his way to acquire Verdy for the company, and the roles he has made for her demonstrate and deepen her conscious artistry. In *The Figure in the Carpet* (that marvelous work now perhaps permanently lost, since the attempt to revive it last fall failed) her big solo gave her command of the stage for an unusually long dance, calling attention to Balanchine's trust in the sovereign power of her art; so did the exquisitely elaborate dance-machinery that brings about the last pose in the adagio of the Tchaikovsky *Pas de Deux*. And then came the special use Balanchine made of her dramatic sense in *Liebeslieder Walzer*. While in the semi-dramatic first section all four women are clearly individualized, only Verdy is involved in a complex personal drama. In the third number, "*Die Frauen*," your eyes are drawn to her because she follows McBride's movements with a pianissimo echo that expresses a curiously proud submissiveness to her partner. Yet in the very next number, a fast duet, she smiles down at Magallanes with sweet delight, in a privileged wifely abandon of pleasure and charm. After this adorable happiness, the first

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slow love duet puzzles you with hints of some disturbed relation with her lover, hints even of shame on his part, when he hides his face from her with his hand. But this seems never to have existed when she flirts wittily with him and his mock-rival in the *pas de trois*: nothing could be more clear-spirited than this innocently sophisticated badinage. Disturbing implications return in the second slow duet and are then concentrated in the most intimately emotional imagery of the whole ballet, when Magallenes slowly carries her almost perversely inert form about the stage — an unparaphrasable image of a private emotional encounter, for which she seems to be forgiving him in her last benedictive gesture. And since this is the last dance before the final assembly, and Verdy the last woman to be caught up in the social whispering of the game, she remains for a long moment still rapt in this private emotion. It is in fact through Verdy, almost alone, that Balanchine creates the elusive, fragmentary drama that is the special beauty of the first section of *Liebeslieder.*

In *Emeralds* Balanchine exploits her individuality more abstractly. After the curtain rises on a complex motionless grouping it is Verdy who initiates the dance with majestically deliberate gestures: a long glance upward establishes relationship with her partner; then a slow arching of the back and extension of the arm accentuate her step forward that brings the whole group into motion. These gestures have an impact far out of proportion to their materials which only Verdy's powerfully inflected style could achieve: it is Balanchine's tribute to her authority. And her variation, which begins with a dance of the arms alone in movements which Verdy follows with her eyes, at once directing and relishing her own grace — this is Balanchine's tribute to her beauty. For Verdy seems to love being on stage and being charming and chic. You can see this in the variation of the Tchaikovsky *Pas de Deux,* where you can also see how freely she has shaped Balanchine's conception into her own personal reading. Few American dancers can attempt such conscious art or explicit theatricality without looking either provincial or greedy. Few European dancers can either. But no dancer except Verdy can give conscious artistry and theatrical charm the surprisingly noble effect of pride, even of courage, all the more moving because she is not only small but continues to look small in many roles, as some dancers don't. And all this makes her a beautifully womanly dancer, a quality that has nothing to do with age but a lot to do with depth of feeling and thinking.

Suzanne Farrell's first important appearance was in *Movements.* In this ballet the dancers wear practice-clothes, and when they finish one "movement" they reassemble for the next in the limber businesslike walk athletes use; the movements themselves, neither theatrical nor intimate,

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are like an expert practice session of difficult balances which begin without fanfare and end without cadence. Because of all this, the untheatrical way Farrell moved her exceptionally beautiful body invited you to think of her as the world's most beautiful athlete. All her gestures were fluid, economical, plaint, graceful; but then everybody knows about the natural grace of athletes, and Farrell's youth accentuated the athletic implications of her fine condition and beautiful coordination. She seemed simply the right instrument for that particular ballet. *Episodes* had played wittily against your expectations of ballet grace and ballet meaning, and Verdy's artistry clarified both the wit and the meaningful, even curiously familiar pattern underlying the odd positions and phrase-lengths. But *Movements* has no witty parodistic intentions or implications, and doesn't get meaning by contrast; nor did Farrell's dancing seem to be playing against a more familiar style. Her untheatrical self-confidence — not at all the same thing as modesty — was simply her way of behaving, hardly a style at all. So you were unprepared for her next role in *Meditation*. In this distinctly romantic love-duet, rather old-fashioned in atmosphere, modern only in its fragmentary elusiveness and ambiguity, Farrell danced not with cool athletic mannerless poise, but with a ravishingly soft and sensuous tenderness. The beautiful athlete had become overnight the great new romantic dancer of our time, and this impression was deepened in the dream-vision dancing in *Don Quixote*, the *pas de deux* at the end of the second act, the long group dance at the beginning of the third. The sophisticated wit in Marcela's gratitude dance in pastoral style showed an even more surprising instinct for genre.

But when she began to appear in roles not specifically contrived for her, the true secret of Farrell's style became apparent. She is not, and probably never will be, a notably warm or dramatic dancer in herself. And she seems almost entirely to lack Verdy's artistic intelligence and dedication: she doesn't seem to shape her roles by conscious decisions. Farrell's grace, taste, warmth — her personality itself — all these seem the unconscious external manifestations of quintessential physical gifts. Denby, in one of his wonderful simplicities, wrote that the basic secret of ballet dancing, as of all kinds of dancing, is how to keep your balance when you are moving very fast and changing direction suddenly. Farrell has this gift to a degree you never thought possible. And since she is also extraordinarily strong, quick and reckless, her sense of balance lets her dance with an impetuosity and an immense dynamic range that no other dancer could risk. For the balance Denby means doesn't have anything to do with standing on one toe for an hour, or never letting your leg wobble in an arabesque: it

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has to do with flexibility and pliability, with rhythm, with being alive on stage.

When the radical simplicity of Farrell's dance inspiration isn't doing its job, nothing more complex or intelligent or civilized is there to take over. I have never been lucky enough to see Verdy's *Sonnambula,* but I have it on the best authority that she enters with an electrifying intensity that hasn't been seen since Danilova's unforgettable performances, and I can easily believe it; her musical and dramatic sense would make her want to carry through the implications in the agitated music. Kent hears these implications too, though her smaller, more lyrical style slightly lessens the intensity. But it's clear that Farrell doesn't really understand the music. She stalks in on points most beautifully, but never projects the meaning that the sleepwalker is desperately, inexplicably, suffering. Yet later in the *pas de deux* you almost stop breathing during that slow, high arabesque at the right front of the stage, an effect that didn't come from understanding the meaning — which nobody could miss anyway — but simply from making the movement on the largest scale possible. Her variation in *Apollo* is the boldest in accent, the most fluidly modulated, the most adventurous I have ever seen or hope to see. Who could ask for more? Yet I can't help asking for a little more intimacy in the *pas de deux,* more warmth, more of the love-play which you'd think was so obviously the point of the episode in which Apollo lays his head in Terpsichore's hands. McBride, whose Terpsichore isn't really one of her good roles, puts this across beautifully; Farrell seems not to care, perhaps because it's a small gesture. You don't think of Farrell as caring much about the details that establish a dramatic meaning, or a genre effect: her dancing in the *Brahms-Schönberg Quartet* has about as correct a gypsy style as you'd see in a high school musical, but her exuberance puts you in such a good humor that you couldn't care less.

In *Liebeslieder Walzer,* as in *La Valse,* she happens to be completely correct in style, but this is the least of the virtues of these incandescent performances. When Diana Adams danced *Liebeslieder* the characterization was basically the same; she too was the most exuberant, joyous, young and free of the four girls, as Verdy was the most mature and experienced. And Adams was as lovely, and danced as beautifully as one could ever want. Then Farrell's very first appearance in the role made you believe you had never really seen it before. Some people explained it by speaking of her actual youth; others murmured reprovingly about "untamed" wildness. But this youth, sweep, speed and impetuosity need no taming: her fantastic energy releases itself in fantastic grace. Of course you have to believe your eyes to see this, just as you

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have to believe your ears to hear that Toscanini's performance of the Haffner Symphony isn't too fast to be graceful. Some things don't seem humanly possible, but when they do happen in front of you it doesn't make good sense to get annoyed. Think of the configurations of Farrell's body in that most eloquent moment in the slow dance of the first part of *Liebeslieder,* for instance, when Stowell folds her over in his arms before he raises her up: Farrell unifies this sequence by instinctively fluid modulating movements that no head-intelligence could contrive: it is like a happening in nature. You see the same thing in the large lifts in the *Brahms-Schönberg,* where every part of her body is in freely curving movement, where nothing is at rest yet everything is beautiful, clear and coherent; you see it most gloriously in the lifts in the last act of *Don Quixote,* the most sensuous movements in ballet.

Balanchine's roles for the magnificent Edward Villella, one of the one of the most exciting dancers who ever lived, show him almost as a character dancer. *Tarantella, Harlequinade,* the *Brahms-Schönberg* and *Rubies* are none of them heroic and noble, and while these words could indeed be used about the role in *Bugaku,* the exotic atmosphere of this piece is not conventional ballet heroism; even Oberon in *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* is *demi-caractère.* But Villella has rightly aspired to the style of the *danseur noble,* and it has been extraordinarily moving to watch him work independently to develop this style which he has now achieved so beautifully. In light lyrical dancing, to be sure, he had the most delicate refinement from the beginning, in the *pas de trois* in *The Figure in the Carpet.* But in *danseur noble* roles he has had to master both the liability of his lack of height and the dangerous asset of his phenomenal electric force. For some time, then, there were discordant elements in his classical style: a slight swagger, a studied virility in entrances, and that curious approach to his partner that B. H. Haggin called his "boxer's weave." He sometimes neglected those boring but indispensable refinements of quiet shoulders and mechanical regularity in stationary spins; in bravura feats he sometimes looked chunky and too vehemently powerful. In *Apollo* there was a beautiful lyricism from the beginning and a tender concern for and control of the muses; but in the heroic sections a few exaggerated accents showed that he had learned the role from the wrong teacher, d'Amboise, and the overall effect used to be at once not powerful enough and too powerful.

Now, after his *Apollo* at M.I.T. last fall, and his debut as Albrecht in *Giselle* this spring in Boston, it is no discourtesy to recall these earlier flaws, so triumphant has been Villella's success in overcoming them; and when one realizes that this self-discipline was happening during the period of necessary overwork that led to his muscle cramp on stage in *Raymonda Variations* last November, one feels far more than a merely

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aesthetic admiration. Villella's extraordinary second act entrance in *Giselle* was a sustained flow of dramatic movement in a large, noble, yet beautifully simple and quiet style; his partnering of Verdy was as lovingly considerate as anything I have seen, and in the variation he shaped his fantastic power into grandeur with no loss of its force. And since one was seeing at the same time Verdy's most beautifully conceived performance, rich and original in mood, uniquely clear in dramatic point, predictably pure in style, the second act of *Giselle* in Boston was one of the great ballet experiences.

But Balanchine's *demi-caractère* roles for Villella remain my favorites, since they half-create, half-release so exciting a dance personality. In *Bugaku* you see Villella's full masculine body force, especially if you compare it with the lack of depth beneath the surface brilliance of Mitchell's performance. Though Villella, like Mitchell, reminds you of the athletic zest of American show-dancing, his natural bodily grandeur and his taste save him from Mitchell's trivial show-business snap and zip. (The beautiful exceptions are Mitchell's roles in *Agon and Pithoprakta.*) As for style: I have heard that the world's most publicized male dancer once decided that Villella needed a lecture on the true Russian tarantella style. But *Tarantella* was choreographed by a true Russian as a brillant amalgam of styles which Villella, since he half–inspired it, understands perfectly, as he understands the more difficult complex of styles in *Rubies. Harlequinade* is an endlessly delightful joke on both Balanchine's and Villella's part — our most electrically brilliant dancer has decided for a change to exhibit miracles of suave finesse. As Oberon you see his accurate comic sense in the exaggerated regal anger; and only Villella's unprecedented combination of speed, deftness and power could embody Balanchine's wonderful conception of Oberon as both a king and a member of the enchanted world of the elves.

Though Mimi Paul's style is closer to Verdy's than to Farrell's, it really isn't like anything else in the world: singularity is her great gift. Verdy, completely an individual, is nonetheless a social creature, she inhabits a life-size world of reasonable, intelligent feeling and thinking; Paul, with her distinctive and exotic head and carriage, her sloping shoulders, her inwardness, creates a remote fantasy realm. Ballet is a dream from which she will not awaken. Just before the waltz begins in *Serenade,* when she is standing in one of ballet's elementary positions, waiting to dance, she looks like a votary, and when she does begin to dance, the waltz almost turns into a rite and a mystery. The same thing happens in *Symphony in C.* Not that Paul's romantic style is wispily poetic: her delicate, fragile sensibility is embodied in formidable physical power. In *The Afternoon of a Faun* it is all but alarming to see her

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wistful face begin to change into a fanaticism of self-study, and to see her movements ascend from elementary practical exercises into heroic poetry. She has the strength of concentration, of security, not Farrell's strength of pliability and balance; she is *assoluta*; but her refinement and her remoteness entirely exempt her from that ugly audience-wowing heartlessness of Plisetskaya.

Allegra Kent's *Bugaku* is the antithesis of Paul's almost painfully intense performance. One often just escapes underestimating Kent, partly because her style is so unemphatic, partly because she hasn't attained the security that she must be capable of and that one frankly suspects might be achieved with a little more rehearsal. Security matters. But other things matter too, and Kent's indifference to security seems the price we must pay for her absolute lack of fanaticism in other respects. In the difficult *Bugaku*, as it happens, she is almost always perfectly secure, but she is not, so to speak, emphatically secure. There is still plenty of tension — the choreography sees to that — but there is also a rich extra meaning in the contrast between Kent's easy delicate grace and the impossibly difficult balances of the movement. Paul goes straight in the direction of the choreography and thrillingly underlines its peculiarity; Kent makes the eroticism more deeply moving, more humane. There is unexotic natural grace in every move Kent makes. Her fluid ease in *Concerto Barocco* reminds me of what Haggin has said about a Cantelli performance: "It just comes into existence." Her arm-positions in the first movement, for instance: she doesn't seem to have *placed* them, the relaxed limpid line just happens to be the way she holds herself. So the grand configurations that open the slow movement startle you with a nobility you wouldn't have predicted.

Patricia McBride's allegro, sharper and neater than Kent's, ought to seem better, but actually it doesn't. Indeed, I have retained my sense that McBride's essential dance instinct is not highly interesting while at the same time I am getting more and more pleasure from her dancing. In *Harlequinade* she is completely delectable; this exquisitely tailored role displays her strengths and hides her weaknesses. But Balanchine made the role in *Tarantella* for McBride too, and her neat precision is not quite alive enough for it. It isn't nearly so interestingly written a role as Villella's, of course — Balanchine is partly to blame — but a dancer with more verve would win more attention than McBride does. But it was a wonderful relief to see her fine, clear and strong *Allegro Brillante* after years of strenuous exertion by Tallchief, Hayden and Wilde. Though there is no high inspiration in McBride's *Swan Lake*, the finish of hers and Villella's conception makes the experience unexpectedly moving. In *Rubies* Balanchine has called forth a nervous power I would once have thought beyond her, but it is her own powerful con-

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tinuity you feel in the mysterious solemnity of her adagio at the end of *Liebeslieder.*

These seem to me the great dancers of the company. Of very many other dependably splendid soloists, I have space to mention only Moncion's undiminished dramatic power, which is immediately *there* whenever he steps on stage, and Marnee Morris' drive toward perfection, which commands an almost moral admiration.

Jewels is Balanchine's gift not only to us but to this great company. It is unquestionably a major work, and most of it is in the absolutely top class of *Apollo, Four Temperaments, Agon, Episodes, Liebeslieder Walzer.* But I admire *Jewels* also because it is a big hit and was meant to be: I like being reminded again of the supreme theatrical instinct that links Balanchine with Shakespeare and Mozart as the kind of genius who can obey and even enjoy and want the necessity of pleasing an audience. *Jewels* is a work of genius both as art and as show-business. I couldn't care less whether these three ballets correctly express the jewels for which they are named, but I enjoyed Balanchine's handing the newspaper people this nice easy puzzle. And though there's no important meaning in the fact that *Jewels* is the "first abstract three-act ballet," there's a lot of good copy in the phrase. The unity of *Jewels* is a matter of surface, of appearance; what is being unified, in fact, is your attention during an evening at the theater. But then that's the aim of all theatrical art. And underneath the expert packaging are three superb new Balanchine ballets.

Jewels exhibits the largest dimension of Balanchine's musicality — not only what he does moment for moment but how he responds to the whole mode and atmosphere of a score. When I heard that he was making a ballet to some sections of Fauré's *Pelléas et Mélisande* my vague memory of this music made me wonder why Balanchine, who loves music with a strong beat and solid theatrical power, wanted to use this luxuriously silky score with almost no beat. *Emeralds* turned out to be unlike anything Balanchine has done before. To suit the slow, even flow of the "Prelude" he has invented a paradise of motionless motion: it is a *mondaine* and elegant paradise, appropriate to the music; the movements, like the music, are pure the way expensive things are pure; yet the ballet is far nobler in feeling and scale than Fauré without disrespect for Fauré's meanings. Compared with the dream of beautiful women in the last act of *Don Quixote,* the Prelude of *Emeralds* suits Fauré because it has no longing, no yearning in it, no pulse or throb of body life, no passion. This gleaming shadowless green world is nature methodized, an artifact. But the people are real and Verdy is the presiding spirit of a civilization elegant yet innocent, removed from nature but not unnatural. The memory of Baudelaire's

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"L'Invitation au Voyage" is inescapable: "La, tout n'est qu'ordre et beauté, / Luxe, calme et volupté."

Many brilliant dances follow the Prelude: the sweep of Mimi Paul's long-limbed solo, and the *pas de trois* in which John Prinz is elegantly sharp and agile, and the two girls quick and cheerful. But the bright, still, unimpassioned clarity of the Prelude governs the dimensions and dynamics of these quicker dances, and motionless motion is recaptured, deepened and momentarily darkened by the *pas de deux* for Mimi Paul and Moncion, which seems to represent the private life of this paradise. Balanchine derives the whole dance from the quiet andante beat of the music, contriving, then, not a dance so much as an evenly measured walk, interrupted at unemphatically unpredictable intervals by extensions and lifts. In this intricate and arbitrary pattern the lovers seem to be obeying a difficult foreign code, quite unlike what we think of as convention in classical adagio. But Mimi Paul's fastidious temperament and Moncion's remote gallantry persuade you that this love-walk, in which even the mechanics of partnering-support are artificially codified, is the correctness of another world. At the emotional climax Balanchine uses one of those distorted configurations we are accustomed to in *Agon, Episodes* or *Movements,* but he has subtly modified it into a kind of Byzantine civility. And then with Verdy the social world returns.

Rubies refashions more familiar elements of Balanchine's style into a new order appropriate to its music, Stravinsky's *Capriccio,* which reminds us of other Stravinsky works and of what Balanchine has done with them. For the parts of the *Capriccio* that most resemble the overtly entertaining show-music of *Jeu de Cartes,* Balanchine has devised movements in the spirit of *Card Game*; but the *Capriccio* is reminiscent too of Stravinsky's more serious music and accordingly we see in *Rubies* elements of Balanchine's serious work: *Four Temperaments,* in particular, but also ballets as far back as *The Prodigal Son* and as far ahead as *Movements* and *Variations.* The recombination makes a new work, and a new feeling.

Marnee Morris' provocative poses in the opening section, for instance, are like sexy show-dancing of the twenties and thirties, but more static and weighty. Near the end of the first movement, when her limbs are manipulated by four men, the effect is funnier than similar things in *Agon,* but the quiet music keeps it from being openly comic. Morris' movements as she leaves the stage remind you of the grave finality of the cadences in the three initial *pas de deux* in *Four Temperaments,* but in *Rubies* the movements are grotesque, on the brink of caricature; so is the men's mass-movement in the opposite direction. In the second movement the distorted accents are seriously witty, with that impersonality and powerful thrust down toward the floor that

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Denby has called attention to in *Four Temperaments*; but Villella's solo has an explosive animal force that isn't like anything in *Four Temperaments*; and McBride's solo has a corresponding nervous drive. The last movement would be as lighthearted as *Card Game* but for the irregular phrase-lengths. The high point of this movement, Villella circling the stage with his gang, crystallizes the period nostalgia and parody you sense throughout the whole ballet — it looks like a trick-cyclists' act. But the basically loose carefree charm is fiercely charged up by Villella's brilliant virtuosity, and the spins as he leaves the stage are just this side of violence. Everybody feels happy about *Rubies,* but the difference between this happiness and what you feel at the end of *Card Game* or *Tarantella,* not to mention *Raymonda* or the Delibes *Pas de deux* and *Divertissement,* isn't just a matter of the fact that *Rubies* is more obviously modern, distorted, odd in accentuation; there's a disturbing intensity in both its moments of stasis and its moments of almost ferocious speed that goes far beyond entertainment.

That there is less to say about *Diamonds* is a fact about the ballet's meaning, not about its value. *Diamonds* is not a newly invented world, like *Emeralds,* nor an inspired new combination of familiar materials, like *Rubies*; its impulse is toward radical purification, distillation, abstraction. Balanchine's aim is to express the quintessence of Petipa's grand style in the nontheatrical dance instinct that is Farrell's greatness, and the only thing to say about it is that he has succeeded. When Farrell is at her best, *Diamonds* is one of the largest, most intense, most uncluttered experiences in ballet.

In the new *Pithoprakta* (the other half of the piece, *Metastaseis,* seemed to me uninteresting in its mass effects, and rather timidly modish in its psychedelic atmosphere) Balanchine has given Mitchell his most exciting role, with peculiarly weighty movements brilliantly contrived to counteract Mitchell's superficiality. But Farrell's movements at the beginning, though interesting, didn't seem very original, and therefore I was unprepared for the astonishing originality of the final *pas de deux.* It begins as a *pas de deux manqué*; and the disturbing image of Mitchell going through the motions of support without daring, or being able, to touch Farrell was turned into something close to horror in the nightmarish twitches, the unmotivated stresses and displacements that took place when the two finally did touch each other, and which continued in their almost dehumanized convulsions when they separated again. The fantastic contrast between this quintessence of disorder and the three utterly different orders of *Jewels* — this is just the latest demonstration of that continuing creative excitement that makes going to see the New York City Ballet a necessity.

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Leon Trotsky

CONCERNING THE INTELLIGENTSIA

It is part of the irony of history that in a period of nearly universal self-betrayal and retreat from advanced positions the caste-pride of the intelligentsia is reaching its highest intensity. Never has the intelligentsia filled so much space, disposing of itself in the most varied camps, among the bourgeois liberals as among the Marxists. Never

TRANSLATORS' NOTE. — This essay, written in 1912, while Trotsky was living as an émigré in Vienna, was first published in the Kiev journal *Kievskaya Mysl* (Kievan Thought). Trotsky had escaped to western Europe from Siberia, where he had been exiled after the 1905-06 Revolution because of his leading role in the first Petersburg Soviet of Workers' Deputies. With the *coup* of June 3, 1907, the autocracy regained most of its powers; the second Duma was dispersed and its Social Democratic deputies were deported to Siberia. The reestablished Czardom crushed the revolutionary parties, executing or jailing thousands of activists. In the circles of the intelligentsia, most of which were openly sympathetic to socialism during the heyday of the revolutionary uprising, a mood of disillusionment, depression and outright confusion prevailed. While Trotsky and other leading Marxists saw in the triumph of reaction nothing more than a mere interlude between two revolutions, a great many members of the intelligentsia shifted their allegiance to other programs and ideologies, such as religious mysticism, "decadentism" in literature and an exalted introspectiveness of a peculiarly self-inflationary kind. Even some members of Lenin's group (e.g., Gorky, Lunacharsky and Bogdanov) went so far as to associate themselves with the tendency known as "God-building." It is against this background that the note of exasperation with the intelligentsia sounded by Trotsky in this essay can best be understood. Also, there is the fact that prolonged sojourn in western Europe provided Trotsky with a new perspective on the Russian movement. He was more European in orientation than almost all of the émigrés, who lived in closed circles completely preoccupied with Russian affairs. Trotsky, on the other hand, who was well versed in French and German, wrote in these languages for leading socialist periodicals and was made to feel at home by the intellectual élite of the German and Austrian Social Democratic parties. Then as in later years he stood for the "Europeanization" of Russian socialism.

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has it been so much in the limelight and so concerned with itself as in recent years. Never before has it carried self-congratulation, self–infatuation and sheer pretense to such a pitch. Having put itself wholly under a microscope, its members scarcely refrain from satisfying their fatuous vanity by minutely recording every one of its gestures and every convolution of its soul. *I am religion, I am culture, I am the past, the present and the future.*

It is well known that Mr. Ivanov-Razumnik[1] has based his entire philosophy of history on this mania for greatness. In his view the Russian intelligentsia is a supra-class formation, a high-principled group burning with a sacred flame. It is the mainspring of historical development, carrying on a significant struggle against philistine ethics and conquering new spiritual domains with which the mass of philistines can come in contact only gradually and assimilate only in small doses. The intelligentsia never rests; with pilgrim's staff in hand it moves on and on — forward to new worlds. According to Ivanov-Razumnik, this self-sufficient movement of the intelligentsia determines Russian history. And Mr. Merezhkovsky has gone so far as to promise that the Russian intelligentsia, armed with religious dogma, will save the entire world from the coming kingdom of the boors. There are people who believe him. Where are the roots of this self-styled Messianism? Is it a reflection of a higher calling or simply another version of Khlestakovism,[2] an old national trait? No, it is little more than an ideological reflection of the fatal curse of Russian history: the character of Karatayev.[3] In its own way it supplements the fatal meekness and submissiveness of Alyosha Gorshok.[4]

In so far as Ivanov-Razumnik has been persuasive in a superficially convincing book, he has created something more than a mere falsification of history. To represent the entire development of our social thought as the self-sufficient history of the intelligentsia is of course a falsification, and a monstrous one at that. But the nub of the matter lies elsewhere: his false theory reflects our backwardness, poverty and cultural pauperism. This tragic and supremely important factor has put its stamp on the whole evolution of our social thought.

1 Ivanov-Razumnik (1878-1945) was a leading historian and critic belonging to the Populist camp. His *History of Russian Social Thought* was entirely centered on the role of the intelligentsia in Russian history.

2 Khlestakov, the protagonist of Gogol's play *The Inspector General,* is an archswindler, braggart and pretender.

3 Platon Karatayev, a character in Tolstoy's *War and Peace,* is the embodiment of the long-suffering submissiveness of the peasant masses.

4 Alyosha Gorshok is the title character of a posthumous story by Tolstoy. Of peasant origin, he works as a servant in the city and lives and dies without uttering one word of protest against his miserable fate.

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II

That we are poor with the accumulated poverty of a thousand years needs no proof. History shook us out of its sleeve into a severe environment and dispersed us thinly over a vast plain. No one proposed a different habitation for us; in the place that bound us we were compelled to put our shoulder to the wheel. The invasions from the Asiatic East, the ruthless pressure of wealthier Europe from the West and the state-Leviathan consuming an excessive part of the people's labor — all of this not only impoverished the working masses but also dried up the sources sustaining the governing layers. Hence their slow growth and the barely perceptible accumulation of "cultural" strata over the virgin soil of social barbarism. The Russian people felt the oppression of the nobility and the clerical estate no less keenly than the nations of the West. But we never experienced that complex and rounded-off way of life — the Gothic lacework of feudalism — which arose in Europe on the foundations of the medieval class-structure. We suffered from an insufficiency of material goods necessary for life; we simply lacked the resources, being a poor nation. For a thousand years we lived in a humble log cabin, the crevices of which were stuffed with moss — to dream of vaulting arcs and Gothic spires would not have become us!

How pitiful was the lot of our gentry. Where were its castles, tournaments, crusades, shield-bearers, minstrels and pages? Of chivalric love it knew nothing. . . . Our bureaucracy recruited from the gentry shows all too plainly the historical meagerness of its class origin. Where are its great powers and names? At its very heights it produced no better than third-rate imitations of the Duke of Alba, Colbert, Turgot, Metternich and Bismarck.

Examine all aspects of culture, one after another. Everywhere the same story. Poor Chaadayev[5] yearned for Catholicism, in which he saw a refined religious culture able to concentrate within itself enormous moral and intellectual forces. With the hindsight of history he saw the highroad of human development in Catholicism and felt himself an orphan on the country lane of Nikon's reform.[6] Catholic Europe produced the Reformation, a powerful movement setting the boundary between

5 Peter Chaadayev (1794-1856), an important social and religious thinker, who was declared insane by Nicholas I and for a time confined to an asylum because of the bold criticism of Russia's history and institutions contained in his so-called "First Philosophical Letter" that appeared in a Moscow journal in 1836.

6 Nikon (1605-1681) was a Russian church patriarch who made changes in the church texts to bring them closer to the Greek originals. The popular opposition to these changes led to the forming of schismatic groups, known as Old Believers, faithful to the uncorrected texts.

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medieval and modern history. The personality of the burgher, bursting the shell of feudalism, turned against the everyday automatism of the Catholic Church; and this personality strove to establish a more intimate relation between itself and God. This was of colossal importance for the revolution of the spirit and for the formation of a new type of individual — and all that took place at the beginning of the sixteenth century! What can our history show that can in any way be compared with the Reformation? Surely not poor Nikon.

How striking is the difference between cultural types when perceived on the basis of urban history! The medieval European town was the stone cradle of the third estate. It was there that every new epoch was prepared. In the crafts, guilds, municipalities, the universities with their assemblies, elections, processions and disputes — in all those forms the precious habits of self-government were crystallized. Among them the bourgeois personality expanded; to be sure, it was a bourgeois personality, but its face was that of a human being, not a snout that every policeman was at liberty to punch. When the third estate felt cramped in the old corporations, it had simply to transform the already existing commercial and personal relationships into the state and nation at large. And how about our Russian cities? Let us leave aside the question of "medieval" times and consider the cities in the era preceding Peter the Great. These were not centers of commerce and artisanship but no more than military and aristocratic excrescences on the body of the Russian countryside. Their role was parasitic. They contained landlords, menials, soldiers and bureaucrats. . . . The bureaucratic masquerade that often took place in various parts of our land neither covered nor concealed our social poverty. During Peter's reign workshops were imposed by police measures, but in the long run handicraft culture failed to flourish under the sponsorship of the police. The poverty of our bourgeois-democratic traditions was thus rooted in the character of our precapitalist cities. Such poverty was simply an extension of our primitive class traditions.

Our Slavophiles, idealising meekness and humility as the best attributes of the Slav soul, set out to preserve this lack of social personality, this slavery of the spirit impotent to rise above the herd instinct. As for the populists, they wanted to make our primitive economic system the basis for social miracles. And finally our newly-constituted subjectivists, crawling on their bellies before the same social and political poverty, are perverting history into an apotheosis of the intelligentsia.

Since the eighteenth century, and even earlier, our entire history has unfolded under the growing pressure of the West. The two groupings

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in our society that have been most swiftly "Europeanized" are becoming increasingly hostile to each other, but both are equally part of the social superstructure and equally distant from the bases of the people's existence. The first grouping is composed of those in charge of the material technology of the state; its members are open to the maximum pressure of the West and their power of resistance is minimal. The second grouping derives its consciousness from a new stratum — the intelligentsia — created by European influences. These influences are making their way incomparably more slowly among the great national masses plunged in darkness as if at the bottom of the ocean; and though the water of the upper layers has already started reflecting the rays of the rising sun, at the bottom the process of change still proceeds in an extremely retarded fashion.

The intelligentsia was a national antenna thrust into European culture. The state both needed and feared it. At first it was forcibly educated by the state, which later held the whip over the heads of those whom it had educated. Since the time of Catherine II the intelligentsia has steadily become more and more hostile to the state, to class privilege and to the propertied classes in general. We know that the determining factor is the poverty, crudity and ugliness of a regime taking its practices from Arakcheyev[7] and its notions of conduct from men like Khlynov.

"You will excuse me, but I don't like that trait in you," says one of the characters in an Ostrovsky play to the merchant Khlynov.

"And what is that trait, may I ask?"

"Your behaving like a pig."

How can swinish behavior be condoned by a person whose intellect has assimilated higher things? Actually, in the light of modern European conceptions, ideas and ideals, everyday Russian traits stand out all the more glaringly and intolerably. For this reason the younger generation coming from the old estates, who have ceased leading a vegetable existence and have entered the sunlit atmosphere of European ideology, have cut themselves loose completely from their previous class traditions and the inherited "respectable" faith. This they have accomplished almost without any internal struggle; and after measuring the spiritual abyss separating their new consciousness from the half-zoological exis-

7 Arakcheyev (1769-1834) was an influential minister under Alexander I, who was hated for his martinetlike strictness and the cruel use of his delegated powers, as in the administration of the infamous "military resettlement" colonies that he set up.

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tence of their fathers, they have become puffed up with ideological arrogance. However, this arrogance merely reflects the obverse side of their social weakness.

Culture binds people together and sets limits and restraints. Culture is conservative, and the richer it is the more conservative it must be. Each great new idea cutting its way through the solid body of an old culture was met in Europe by the deadening resistance of the old, outworn ideology as well as by the strong rebuff of organized interests. In struggling against this opposition, the new idea generated its own considerable powers, spreading to ever wider circles, and at long last scored a victory when adopted as the banner of new classes and groupings seeking to establish their own place in the sun. And these new classes bound and delimited the new idea in the very process of adapting and subordinating it to their own purposes, thus depriving it of an absolute meaning. Yet it is by means of this very delimitation of the idea that general social development took a giant step forward. The new idea acquired all the more social stability by developing organically; and its definitive victory turned it of course into a conservative force in its own right.

The new idea appeared to us from the West as a product already prepared by foreign ideological evolution, as a finished formula — like corals slowly formed in the ocean by the power of some natural process but which women receive ready-made as necklaces for personal adornment. . . . There is no reason to speak of the first periods of borrowing in our history. Peudo-classicism, romanticism and sentimentalism, which in the West stood for whole epochs and classes, profound historical reshufflings and experiences, were perverted by the aristocratic salons of Moscow and Petersburg into purely formal stages of literary evolution. Later on, however, the ideas ceased being mere coral adornments; instead they became the intelligentsia's sources of action, sometimes of an heroically sacrificial character. But in that more mature epoch our historical poverty served to create an enormous discrepancy between the ideological premises and the social results achieved through the intelligentsia's efforts. Thus it became the historical calling of the Russian intelligentsia to use watches for hammering nails into walls.

In order not to become a drunken sot spending his time playing cards in the gross and inebriated atmosphere of the "dead souls," an educated Russian had to acquire some great ideological concern, attracting, like a magnet, all the significant moral forces and concentrating them at a consistently high level of intensity. In order not to take bribes and stay away from the company of promoters and grafters, he needed a set of principles separating him from his milieu and

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turning him into a renegade. He was forced to join the Carbonari or at least the Free Masons. In order to marry in a way contrary to Papa's orders, he had to become a materialist and a Darwinist; and along with that came the realization, reached not without tough-mindedness, that man is descended from the apes, to which Papa, in the rising ladder of evolution, seemed to stand closer than his son. If he concerned himself with the Roman Law or the surgeon's lancet, he was in principle compelled to read forbidden literature and brought to the conviction that without political freedom the lancet will turn out to be a dull and rusty hunk of iron. In its struggle for a constitution the intelligentsia needed the ideal of socialism. Finally they had to renounce all "fleeting" political values before the supreme tribunal of "Duty" and "Truth," only for the purpose of making it easier to compromise themselves with the regime imposed by Nicholas II after the suppression of the revolutionary outbreaks of 1905.

Thus we encounter the fatal discrepancy between ideology and practical, living social reality. The intelligentsia, however, has been taking this glaring evidence of its own poverty of thought as justification of its unabashed haughtiness.

"Look," they say, "at the kind of people we are: special, chosen, anti-philistine, seeking the City of the Future. If we are to speak frankly and tell the whole truth, we must admit that the Russian people are savages; they don't wash their hands and don't rinse their water-dippers. The intelligentsia, however, has suffered crucifixion for the people's welfare. It has taken all the anguish of the truth upon itself. For a century and a half it has never hesitated to offer its very life for the passion that consumes it." In fact, the intelligentsia substituted itself for political parties, classes and the people themselves. It has lived through entire cultural epochs — for the sake of the people. It has marked out the roads of development — again for the people. Where has all this titanic work taken place? In the imagination of this same intelligentsia.

III

The culture of the classes from which the old Russian intelligentsia severed itself was primitive and incapable of absorbing the growing forces of individual consciousness. The *intelligent* liberated himself from his old class background almost without any struggle, under the influence of ideas engendered in a higher culture of greater value. Torn from his old roots, this class-splinter, turning into an apostate, came to consider himself absolutely free in his choice of paths and methods. He was finished with the past and envisioned the future as a large, blank

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sheet. From this arose the subjective radicalism of our repentant noblemen and rebellious seminary students, and this too is the source of their delusions of grandeur.

In the novel *A Raw Youth,* Dostoevsky's Versilov looks at Europe, as Herzen did, with an anguish not unmixed with contempt. "There," he says, "the conservative is only struggling to protect his living, and the store-clerk pours out his kerosene only to earn his daily morsel of bread. Russia alone lives *not for itself but for the sake of an idea. . . .* It is now nearly a century since Russia [that is, Russia's intelligentsia] has been living without any thought for itself but for Europe alone." The same Versilov says, "Europe created the noble images of the Frenchman, the Englishman, and the German; but it still knows almost nothing of the nature of the future man. It would seem, however, that Europe still does not care to know. This is understandable, *as they are not free, whereas we are free.* In all of Europe, I, with my Russian anguish, was the only free man. . . ." Versilov cannot see that, unlike the European conservative or the clerk in the kerosene-store, he had freed himself not only from the fetters of his class traditions but also from the possibility of social creativity. The same faceless environment which had given him his subjective freedom also loomed before him as an objective barrier.

In Europe, with its cultural order and defined intellectual capital, you walk on the pavement as you had been taught to walk. You will not find absolute freedom there. In their basic outline, the activities of European political parties and their leaders are determined by the nature of the objective situation. It is hardly the same with us, where the intelligentsia is not bound by anything, least of all by anything within its own mind. "They," in Europe, are bound by plans, conventions, textbooks, programmatic definitions of class interests, while I am absolutely free amidst my social steppes. But a remarkable thing happened: the absolutely free Russian *intelligent* walked three steps and got lost, in the most shameful fashion, among three pines. So he returns to learn from Europe, taking its latest ideas and words and then again rebelling against their stipulated, limited, "Western" meaning. He assimilates them to his absolute "freedom"; in other words, he empties them of meaning and turns back to the starting-point, having described a circle of 80,000 versts[8] around himself. Another way of saying the same thing: "He repeats all the old saws and lies enough for two men."

"You deny me," says our barbarian society to the aristocratic *intelligent* who has ascended into the realm of "freedom" or to the

8 *Verst*: a unit of distance equal to .66 miles.

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rebellious priest's son, "but I in turn deny you. Look how crumbly, soft, and formless I am — you'll never catch hold of me. I can neither bind you nor discipline you, that's true; you have your 'freedom.' But as sculptural material for modeling your ideals I'm good for nothing. You're on your own and I'm on my own. Make your own history but count me out."

We have people but no society
In solitude Russian thought grew up
And it wanders without work to do.

Versilov's version of "freedom" could have no other meaning than this freedom of our thought to wander without any work to do. It is the sort of absolute freedom possessed by the revolutionary Morozov, a member of the People's Will party, who in prison set out to produce solutions to the riddles propounded in the Book of Revelations. This is the "freedom" that hangs like a curse over the whole history of the Russian intelligentsia.

"What difference does it make whether or not my words are translated into action? My thoughts and words serve as action," the *intelligent* might say about himself, "and I will them to my heirs." But in the realm of world thought the Russian intelligentsia was only a Johnny-come-lately; it made its way on the basis of what was already accomplished, contributing nothing of its own. It found at its disposal an enormous choice of prepared literary movements, philosophical systems, scientific doctrines and political programs. In any European library it could observe the image of its spiritual growth in thousands of mirrors, large, small, round, square, flat, concave or convex. This taught it the process of self-observation, refined its intuition, flexibility, adaptiveness, sensitivity — the feminine attributes of the psyche in general; at the same time, however, it cut at the roots of the physical strength of thought. This perpetual possibility of getting an idea easily and at once, almost without effort, together with a ready-made criticism of the idea and a criticism of the criticism, could not but paralyze independent theoretical creativity. "Our minds," Chaadayev once remarked perceptively about the Russian intelligentsia, "are not furrowed by the indelible traces of consistent intellectual movement because we borrow our ideas already developed." In consequence we often produce a terrible intellectual hash, a continuous series of theoretical misunderstandings, and the most unexpected philosophical home brews. . . .

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One cannot but react with exasperation to the smugly respectful historians and portrait artists of our intelligentsia. For a century and a half it has been selfless, living "for Europe," etc., etc.—and what exactly have we given in the area of philosophy or social science? Nothing, a round zero. Try to name some Russian philosopher whose greatness is beyond doubt? Vladimir Solovyov, who is usually remembered only on the anniversary of his death.[9] His foggy metaphysics has not entered the history of world thought; even in Russia his ideas failed to produce anything like a philosophical movement. A little bit was borrowed from Solovyov by Messrs. Berdyayev, Ern and Viacheslav Ivanov.[10]

Mr. Gart, a philosopher from the ranks of the right-wing bourgeois liberals, feels lost in view of the unrestrained manner in which the military martinets commit outrages, bewailing the impotence of his party in the face of all their excesses. Helplessly he searches for some categorical imperative, which must of course come from nowhere else but the "wide Russian soul" (including no doubt the souls of the military martinets); and he hopes that this imperative would somehow correspond with the Russian soul's good-natured, easygoing quality, helping it to develop a sense of inner discipline and weaning it from the habit of taking bribes. "Where is the imminent Slavic Kant?" asks his puny forerunner. In truth, where is he? He does not exist. Where is our Hegel? Where is one of our own of equal importance in the history of thought? In philosophy we have none but third-rate disciples and faceless epigoni.

We have been rich with "original" social Utopianism, and even now we distract ourselves a bit with it. But what exactly have we contributed to the treasury of social thought? Populism, the Russian surrogate of socialism? It is nothing but the ideological response of the Asiatic element within us to the capitalist progress threatening us. Russian populism is only a small chapter in the spiritual history of historical provincialism.

Where are our great Utopians? The best of them is Chernyshevsky, but he was held back by the narrowness of his social environment; so he remained a disciple and never grew into a teacher. Herzen, Lavrov

9 Vladimir Solovyov (1853-1900), a religious philosopher, poet and publicist.
10 Nikolay Berdyayev (1874-1948), philosopher and analyst of Russian ideological movements, lived abroad after the Bolshevik Revolution and wrote many books that have been translated into European languages. Ern (1882–1917), a Slavophile writer. Vyacheslav Ivanov (1866-1949), a Russian symbolist poet and critic who played a leading role in the modernist Russian literary movement.

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and Mikhaylovsky[11] will never in any way enter the history of world socialism; they are completely absorbed in the history of the Russian intelligentsia. Perhaps Bakunin alone has inscribed his name in the book of the European workers' movement, but to accomplish that he had to cut himself off from his roots in Russian society. Moreover, he did not enter the European movement as a necessary and integral part. His participation is a transient episode, and one not even representing a step forward. What remains now of Bakuninism? A few prejudices in the workers' organizations of the Latin nations. . . .

To be sure, at this point one could bring in Tolstoy. But this will not carry full conviction. There can be no doubt that the image of Tolstoy, with the cord around his peasant shirt and the bast sandals on his feet, has imposed itself upon world thought; yet this is not because of his social philosophy but rather because he himself was such an enormous human fact. His "teachings" have remained what they always were: subjective forests of his soul of great biographical value. After the European religious transformations and revolutions and after the spread of the Western social doctrines of the nineteenth century, what new meaning can the words of Tolstoy have?

Let us say it once more: the history of our social thought has up to this time not even driven a small wedge into the general history of the human mind. Is this a little hard on national pride? Well, in the first place, historic truth is not a lady-in-waiting on national self-love. And secondly, we would do better to invest our national pride in the future rather than in the past.

The absence of historical traditions and distinct political groupings has necessarily brought about a deficiency in personal moral stability. In a disintegrating "unhistorical" environment it is much easier to sacrifice one's life for an idea than to actualize it in a coherent fashion *throughout* one's life. It must be admitted that the well-known criticism at the expense of the Russian intelligentsia — that "up to the age of thirty they are radicals and after that they are scoundrels" — is not without a grain of truth. However crudely Goncharov's caricature of the nihilist in his novel *The Precipice* is drawn, there is nothing implausible about the fact that he has a change of heart and turns into a Junker. Has it been long since the candidate for the Gracchi, who eventually becomes a customs-inspector because his "milieu devoured him," has been retired from his traditional role in Russian fiction?

11 Pyotr Lavrov (1823-1900), one of the philosophical leaders of the Populist radical movement. Nikolay Mikhaylovsky (1842-1904), a radical literary critic and a sociologist stressing the "subjectivist" method.

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How did the best of them manage to survive? By means of terrible moral exertions, concentrated asceticism, long-lasting estrangement from their society. With no social ground to stand on, moral stability could be achieved only at the cost of fanaticism in the world of ideas, relentless self-limitation, an opinionated and suspicious attitude, and unflagging surveillance of one's own purity. "The small hare jumps into the fire but does not betray his faith," said Archpriest Avvakum. It is not in the special convolutions of the Slavic brain that you must search for the roots of the fanaticism which possessed the Old Believers. It is the social conditions of Old Russia that explain their jealous watching over the letter in disregard of the spirit. This characteristic is still frequently to be observed among the more extreme groups of our intelligentsia. It is also well known that when it comes to the consistency of the intelligentsia's faith, its refusal to swallow gnats scarcely prevents it from gulping down two-humped camels.

"I am a Yid, and I don't sit down at the same table with philistines," wrote Belinsky.[12] None the less, for all the moral coherence of his personality, Belinsky was forced to change his opinions repeatedly and radically. Ideological implacability, a noble trait in any fighter, is too weak a guarantee of tenacity if it fails to find continuous support in the objectively irreconcilable character of social relations. It is very common for members of our intelligentsia to change their views time and again — and not only those who turn into Customs Inspectors after the age of thirty. This phenomenon is rather a necessary concomittant to Versilov's kind of absolute freedom, the freedom "to wander about without any work to do."

These changes of outlook can have a subjectively tragic quality, as in the case of Belinsky, a comically banal quality, as in Struve, a semantically superficial quality, as in Minsky and Balmont, a renegade quality, as in Katkov and Tikhomirov[13] — still their historically determined

12 Belinsky, the famous radical critic, was not Jewish, and Trotsky savors the irony.

13 Peter Struve (1870-1944), a "legal Marxist" in the eighteen nineties, abandoned Marxism in later years, joining the bourgeois-liberal party known as Cadets. Minsky (pseudonym of N. M. Vilenkin, 1855-1937), poet and critic of the modernist so-called decadent school. Constantine Balmont (1867-1943), a prominent poet of the modernist school sharply criticized by the radicals for his "uncivic" attitude. N. M. Katkov (1818-1887), journalist and editor famous in his time, renounced radicalism and turned into a supporter of the autocracy. L. A. Tikhomirov (1852-1923), a leader of the radical People's Will party, denounced the revolutionary movement and, like Katkov, became a supporter of the Tsarist regime.

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cause is one and the same. In the last analysis it is our social poverty which accounts for them.

Count Rastopchin once made the ironic comment about the Decembrist uprising of 1825 that in France the "rabble" brought about a revolution to make itself equal with the aristocracy whereas our aristocrats made a revolution in the interest of the "rabble." Rastopchin's paradox is used by Ivanov-Razumnik to emphasize the supra-class, purely idealistic character of the Decembrist movement. To what degree and in what proportions the elements of disinterested, idealistic radicalism were combined by the Decembrists with their class interests is another question. It is nevertheless true that the Decembrists acted out a part that the Russian intelligentsia has reenacted more than once. The Decembrists acted in a "substitutive" fashion for the interests of a class that had not yet emerged in Russia. They acted for bourgeois liberalism by proxy, as it were.

This representation of nonexistent or feebly developed classes — a role masking the social weakness of the intelligentsia — has now become an ideological necessity for it and almost a political profession. At first the aristocratic intelligentsia substituted itself for the "rabble," then plebeian populists substituted themselves for the peasantry; finally, the Marxist intelligentsia substituted itself for the proletariat. . . . Two more decades passed before the real live peasantry could demonstrate its authentic and cohesive social personality; and only then did the intelligentsia play-acting in the part of pseudo-peasants come to an end. Thus, throughout our history the intelligentsia's role as ideological standard-bearer was connected with the country's political life not through the class which it wanted to serve but merely through the "idea" of that class. So it was with the first Marxist circles among us. Only very gradually did the spirit become flesh.

During the 1905-6 Revolution large social entities appeared on the historical scene — classes able to proclaim their own interests and their own demands. At one stroke Russian events leaped into world prominence, arousing a powerful response in Europe and in Asia. Political ideas ceased to be ethereal spirits wafted down from some kind of ideological heaven; the intelligentsia had exhausted historically its role as class proxy. It is remarkable, though, that directly after those eventful years the intelligentsia's bacchanalia of self-exaltation should have gone into full swing! In just this way as the lamp is put out its flame flares up more brightly than ever.

It is sheer nonsense to say that after a great effort history must

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turn back on itself. The bureaucracy has turned backwards; but though the bureaucracy controls many things, it hardly controls the course of history. The ahistorical character, the Karatayev-like quality of our masses has disappeared forever. There can be no returning to it. Likewise, we are finished for good with the apostolate of the intelligentsia.

After three years of smug prostration the intelligentsia has begun to straighten up again. What a pitiful spectacle! It would be naïve, though, to believe that it can ever again return to the epoch preceding the 1905 Revolution. History does not repeat itself. However great the intelligentsia's past significance, henceforth it can only play a subordinate role. Its heroic "substitutive" role has now passed into historical eternity.

(Translated from the Russian by Philip Rahv and Irwin Weil.)
(Footnotes and Translators' Note supplied by Philip Rahv.)

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Betty Falkenberg

THE NEW WAVE GERMAN STYLE

German film history is virtually unthinkable without the theoretical writings of Walter Benjamin. In his essay, "Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit," Benjamin intuitively hit on some of the first principles of contemporary film theory. His ideas were taken up and systematized by Siegfried Kracauer, who saw in movies the ideal medium for capturing the complex reality of a technological universe. His theory of "social reality," as opposed to the dadaist view of film as art, or Astruc's film as language, is at the core of the new German cinema.

It was not until the cracks in the prosperity mask of the post–Adenauer regime began to show through, however, that the new cinema was given so much as a chance in the Federal Republic. Now commercial movie houses are beginning to show new cinema films along with the usual run-of-the-mill programs.

Der Junge Törless, the movie made from a novella by Musil, is just one example — and not the most representative — of the new wave in Germany. The really experimental films are being made by young writers and filmmakers working together.

An example of such collaboration is *Tätowierung*, a movie based on an idea by Gunter Herburger, whose short-story collection, *A Monotonous Landscape*, appeared recently in English translation. Benno, the hero of *Tätowierung*, is subjected to a ritual tatooing by the members of a gang at his reform school. Shortly after this incident, he is removed from the school and adopted by well-meaning, well-to-do parents who try to "integrate" him into their Biedermeier lives. What they fail to grasp is that Benno has been branded, that hate and hostility have been tatooed on his soul.

"We understand," is the insidious expression of their smug complacency and of their refusal to cope with the realities of a situation. Repeated over and over, it becomes a kind of abracadabra, lulling them

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into an ever more complacent belief in their own tolerance and charity. Incidentally, their waning sexuality is titillated by the presence of the boy and their fifteen-year-old niece, whom they are constantly trying to pair off with each other. One is hardly shocked at the end when Benno, fed up with all their bourgeois double-talk, finally shoots his amiable "father" on a family outing. The message seems clear: good-will and liberal-mindedness alone can't make "adjusted" citizens of people (young or otherwise) who have been branded by hate.

The film exploits the very voyeurism on which movies thrive — but for its own purposes. When the camera draws the viewer up close while Benno's father helps his niece up a ladder, so that he too can peer under her skirt, it does so only to pull back again, forcing the viewer to make a moral judgment on Benno's father — and on himself. Too many situations exist, however, as mere vehicles for a thesis (in the scene above, it is the hypocrisy rather than voyerurism as such which is decried); and too often audience emotion is manipulated in ways which seem specious. Furthermore, the clichéd use of certain film techniques detracts from the film's credibility as social critique.

Mahlzeiten is a film by Edgar Reitz, the co-director with Alexander Kluge of the Film Department of the Hochschule für Gestaltung in Ulm. His movie is about a woman whose bovine love of life, and anti-feminist "naturalness," is pap-bred by women's magazines, and in whom happiness becomes a perversion because it is pursued for its own sake. Elizabeth hits on a victim to "love," marries and embarks on a career of childbearing (hence the title: she is perpetually feeding, nursing one baby after the other, while at the same time feeding on, in fact devouring, her milk-toast husband). After five children, and an aborted attempt to leave her, Rolf, brought quietly to the edge of despair by Elizabeth's incorrigible optimism, takes to the woods to inhale the gas fumes of his Volkswagen. Elizabeth, undaunted, goes on to her next great love, a Mormon, marries again, and with the five children from her first marriage, emigrates to the "land of the brave and the free" to live happily ever after once more.

During the entire film the camera dotes on Elizabeth in all her warm sensuality. Reitz heaps image on image; one mawkish scene follows the other, till the final saccherine effect is achieved. But either it is too subtle (for this viewer at least) or — it isn't subtle enough. Elizabeth is made to look so beautiful that one begins to doubt the camera's integrity. Which side is he on? If Reitz intended to imitate even the photographic style of the women's magazines to make his point, this should be made evident in some way. Otherwise, as in

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Tätowierung, the caricature is not always distinguishable from the imitation.

In these movies, one can find certain evidences of the *nouvelle vague* — not so much in its formalism, but rather in the way material is used, in the abandonment of fixed storylines and conventional plot in favor of a freer structure, and in a more conscious use of dialogue for purposes other than dramatic.

But the freshest approach to cinema is that of Alexander Kluge, who has made two movies to date. The first, *Abschied von Gestern,* is a film version of his own short story, "Anita G.," and retains the same authenticity that marks his prose.

Like Godard, Kluge likes to work with nonprofessionals. He uses an idea as a loose framework, moving about freely within it, obliging the actors to think and feel for themselves, react on the scene to newly–put situations and improvise their own dialogue.

Kluge also makes use of texts projected on the screen to interrupt the flow of action and create the now-classical effect of Brechtian alienation. (Reitz also uses this technique in *Mahlzeiten.*) The texts have diverse functions. They are not, as one might expect, mere statements of the author's view; they propose dialectical poles which cancel each other out. This is a favored technique of much new German prose and is a method which seems ideally suited to stating the intellectual's dilemma in today's world. Very often statements, not in themselves absurd, are worked to absurdity by the action which exemplifies them. In other instances, slogans or clichés are quoted in visual contexts which unmask them.

Abschied von Gestern describes the vicissitudes — more down than up — in the life of a young and mixed-up socialist, a girl of Jewish origin who flees from Leipzig to the West. The year is 1966. Kluge parachutes Anita G. into the field of West German double-standard morality, to be buffeted around by the winds of Beamtertum and to break at last on the reef of West German callousness. Pregnant, she lands in prison. Anita G. is a fresh young thing who drifts into criminal activity after being misused by everyone she meets. Experience fails to embitter or to wisen her. Or is Anita G. Germany itself, East and West, which has failed to learn from its own history? In any case Kluge is more interested in depicting social than psychological reality, and the film suffers, as a film, because of this. Subtlety gets sacrificed for clarity, and art for moral thesis.

"Something's got to give," says a loony trapeze artist in Kluge's second film, *Artisten in der Zirkus Kuppel: Ratlos.* Quite so. And what

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gives is Kluge's new film itself. For all their use of avant-garde techniques, for all their forward-looking social concepts, the cinema of social reality had been barking up a dead tree. A Shaw or an Ibsen can hardly expect, today, to be hailed as a new prophet just because he's changed his medium. The message remains the same and it's a tired message for all its noble intent.

Kluge's title proclaims the break. *Artists in the Circus Dome: Bewildered*[1] is a precise description of the artist's situation and state of mind in the sixties; the film, itself, an extended metaphor exploring mind's terrain. Anxiety is taken out of its cement cast and made fluid.

As in *Abschied von Gestern*, there is a loose story, this time about a trapeze artist who decides to start her own circus. Not just another circus like all the rest, but a "reform" circus, one that would "engage" the audience rather than entertain. Leni Peickert's ideas are not always practical or feasible. In fact, they are often totally absurd. For one thing she wants to confront the audience with really wild animals. From someone who has read his Lorenz she must be told, "Animals are wild only in the jungle." But in order to realize her plan at all, she finds she must have capital. Indeed, she becomes a "capitalist," and makes most of the necessary adjustments to the system, compromising many of her original aims. Still the circus fails. Leni is arrested for tax evasion and forced to give up the animals. With them go her hopes of reforming the circus. If you want to change the world, then by little steps. Big steps will make a fool of you and get you nowhere. Besides, circus is an anachronism; today's circus is TV. And so, just as she read up on circus history, now she does her homework on the "cool" medium, takes a job at a TV station and starts working her way up the departmental ladder. The movie ends on a vague hope: maybe some day the two things will grow together — the artist's love for his art and the technics of TV.

Kluge's plot is sheer parable. But not parable in the Biblical sense, with a moral tucked away in the hem. If the movie is a book with seven seals, then an open-ended apocalpyse. Nor is there anything esoteric about the symbols he uses; they are all fearfully present in the things around us. Fantasy is employed not to distract us from our terrors but to confront us with them on a deeper, unconscious level. Every image can awaken countless associations, different for each viewer, according to his history.

There are themes. But no themes of social utility, and no solutions,

1. Shown in America as *Artists Under the Big Top: Perplexed*.

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implied or otherwise. What Kluge has done is make a state of mind palpable, open to perception and analysis. He has translated his own dilemma, the dilemma of a generation, into visual images and accoustic forms that go off like explosions in the mind. Neither are the themes all new: but their presentation, the shocking juxtapositions, wrench the viewer out of his mental apathy and force him to see things in new perspectives.

Circus is art, and — says Kluge — art is circus. He doesn't say this in words, but "quotes" film material from last year's meeting of the *Gruppe* 47 and underlays it with brash circus music. Circus and art are in their very essence further related to flying and death. Death in the circus is common, whether as a result of falling from great heights, (dizzying film sequences on the trapeze are interrupted by photo stills of airplane crashes) or as a result of animal attacks, particularly by tamed animals who go suddenly berserk. Death is the natural expression of human expectations — and whether it comes in the circus arena or in war, it is generally the result of a meaningless confrontation. At the same time death is liberating, it is like sex, like a trapeze act. Again, there is nothing new in these ideas, it is their visual presentation, at once subtle and shocking, that makes the film.

To cite just one instance: some of the most poignant scenes involve animals, elephants in particular, as Kluge ascribes to the thick-skinned beasts all the failings and miseries of human beings. There is a scene recalling a historic fire in the elephant house of a Chicago circus, a scene of appalling chaos, in which the trapped animals stand passive till the fire consumes them. The whole tragic inadequacy of the human response to disaster is implicit here, but instead of being viewed sentimentally, it is informed by the bitter realization that passivity is "avenged" by delayed, and often misplaced, future aggression. Two voices in the background chant a text in canon, so that the words are at first unintelligible, and only after many repetitions does the meaning emerge. "Our memory of the pains of fire . . . wounds of the spirit . . . wounds of the flesh . . . the thick-skinned ones never forget. They take their memories, pack them in wooden crates and deposit them at the bottom of the sea. The elephants never forget. Rather shoot than forget."

Throughout there is a terseness about the texts that is at once comical and poignant. When Manfred Peickert fails to grip his partner's hand and falls from the trapeze to his death, the film comments, "Da packt Peickert die Melancholie; er fasst die hand nicht." (Melancholia takes hold of Peickert; he does not grasp the hand.) The whole tragi-comic situation of man is suddenly there.

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One of the most insistent themes — the senselessness (yes and no) of the notion of artistic perfection in the face of world misery — is interwoven with another, the question posed by Adorno, whether, after Auschwitz, a poem is possible.

But a list of the themes, like a summary of the plot, or an enumeration of the techniques employed, is like a list of ingredients, a recipe. What counts is the taste on the tongue, and that can't be had in words. The movie's triumph is that it is a magnificent statement that there can be no statement. When, at the very beginning of the movie, Manfred Peickert suggests — why not get the elephants up into the circus dome? — the director retorts, "That is irrational." "Yes," says Peickert, smiling weirdly, "but it would be a great feeling."

Art, sex, flying to the moon, the futility of the elephants turning on their tiny stools — what does it all mean, and how is it all going to end? Artisten in der Zirkus Kuppel: Ratlos. . . .

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CONTEMPORARY NONSENSE

MODEL HOMES NAMED AFTER POETS

The homes and streets in the Bo-Bud Construction Co.'s community of Winterset are named for famous poets. The community itself takes its name from a play by Maxwell Anderson.

Winterset is located in the Annandale area of Fairfax County. The five models are priced in the lower forties. Included are the Winterset and the Shelly, two-stories; the Browning, a rambler; the Frost, a split-level; and the Whitman, a split-foyer.

Of the 67 acres in the community, 20 are being set aside for park land. Many trees will shade the homes along such streets as Browning, Whitman, Frostway, Shelley and Poe.

(*The Washington Daily News*, September 27, 1968). Contributed by Arthur Hall Smith, Washington, D.C.

MATING OF TWO PANDAS TO BE TRIED 3d TIME

LONDON, Aug. 14 (UPI) — Zoologists in Moscow and London have appealed to colleagues in China for information on the mating habits of pandas, which are native to the Chinese province of Szechwan. The Chinese have refused to reply.

(*New York Times*, August 15, 1968).

BRAINWASHING

SAIGON, Sept. 5 — United States Army psychologists said today they are working on a plan to brainwash enemy troops with bars of soap that reveal a new propaganda message practically every time the guerrillas lather up. As the soap is used, gradual wear reveals eight messages embedded in layers.

(*The Guardian*, September 6, 1968). Contributed by Ian Allen, Wrexham, North Wales, UK. Alternate versions submitted by Bruce Dollar, Pleasantville, N.Y. and Alan C. Elms, Davis, California.

SECOND THOUGHTS ON BIRTH CONTROL

AUCKLAND, NEW ZEALAND (AP) — The Canterbury University Students Assn. has revoked its decision to install contraceptive vending machines on the Christchurch campus.

The decision caused a public outcry. Selwyn Dawson, President of the National Council of Churches, said it seemed to place sex in the same category as chocolate, cigarettes and chewing gum.

(*New York Post*, September 10, 1960).

EDITORS' NOTE: *We'd like to remind our readers that they are invited to send in examples of nonsense. A free subscription to* PR *will be awarded for each contribution used. In case of a tie, single copies will be sent to the late comers.*

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BOOKS

THE INDIAN WANTS THE BRONX

THE RETURN OF THE VANISHING AMERICAN. By Leslie A. Fiedler. Stein and Day. $5.95.

Leslie Fiedler's new book completes the "venture in literary anthropology" begun with *Love and Death in the American Novel* and continued in *Waiting for the End.* Having dealt with "*eros* and *thanatos*" and with "the hope of apocalypse and its failure," he now turns to "the Indian," which sounds odd and anticlimactic and I'm afraid finally is so, taking *The Return of the Vanishing American* as an individual critical performance. The significance of the whole venture I leave to the American Studies people to worry out — part of the fun of reading Fiedler (and of *being* him, I dare say) is imagining their solemn outrage. I am more interested in figuring out why so lively and intelligent a book leaves me feeling disappointed and annoyed.

By now the objections to Fiedler's procedures are virtually standardized. He can be careless about little accuracies (*What Are We Doing in Vietnam?* is a good question but not the title of a Mailer novel) and silly with his analogies ("those first hippies of the Western world, Raleigh, Marlowe, and company"), and his habit of melodramatizing history will not be to everyone's taste: "It is only a step from thinking of the West as madness to regarding madness as the true West, but it took the long years between the end of the fifteenth century and the middle of the twentieth to learn to take that step." He likes to work with a stacked deck, too, as when he argues blandly that "the real opposite of nostalgic is psychedelic, the reverse of remembering is hallucinating, which means that, insofar as the New Western is truly New, it, too, must be psychedelic." The force of "real" and "truly" is worth pondering, and one relishes those fussy little commas toward the end, with their air of nice rational precision. Those of us who thought the reverse of remembering was forgetting will feel pretty baffled; but Fiedler is an incorrigible rascal, and to forbid him his tricks would deprive us of the often brilliant insights he has up his sleeve.

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The insights in *The Return of the Vanishing American* are, however, achieved at a pretty high price. For example, the very interesting chapter called "The World Without a West" pairs off two views of American Indians held around 1600 — Montaigne's, that the new men in the West *were* men, culturally different from Europeans but human and humanly important, fit objects for anthropological curiosity and maybe even covert primitivist admiration, and Shakespeare's, that the Indian (Caliban = cannibal = Carib) is a dark enemy, a bestial rapist who threatens the White pieties of marriage, feminine culture, and order generally. It probably does no good to protest that *The Tempest* is not "about" Caliban, that in pursuing a large and complex dramatic purpose Shakespeare found current lore about Indian cannibalism and sexual prepotency useful in imagining a figure of brute passion and (which Fiedler doesn't mention) low comic cunning, just as he did lore about blackamoors and amphibians. *The Tempest* is *not* "a violent attack on the whole Indian race, disguised as a Mystery Play," nor does Fiedler's point about the mythic value of Indians really demand that it be taken as such; it's just a provocative remark, one that comes all the easier for Fiedler's lack of interest in literary works as whole expressive objects, his concern, like some crazed Ph.D. candidate, only for what they *contain* that fits your investigative category. If you are looking for Indians in the Renaissance you will find Caliban; just so, if you're looking for certain myths you will be surprised and irritated when they're not there — Fiedler calls Irving obtuse for not having put some Indians into "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" and Twain disingenuous for pretending not even to notice "the woodland romance between the White Man and the Indian" that was *really* what irked him about Cooper. (When someone doesn't see what you want him to see you conclude that he's covering up what he's secretly afraid of — we owe lots of nonsense about Jane Austen, for example, to this kind of reasoning.) By a happy chance, Fiedler's own story "The First Spade in the West" suits his critical purposes better — the right ingredients are *there*, and he cites it three times.

But even this sort of thing, which I don't assume Fiedler is unaware of or unamused by, doesn't account for my reservations. For all the hocus-pocus, Fiedler's exploration of his main myth — the enmity between men (secret anarchists and escape artists) and women (all possessive, castrating, culture-mongering Jewish-mother types) — is intriguing and often subtle. If the myth seems a little large to be just American, it gets adequately domesticated through a fourfold division into the sub-myths of The Runaway Slave (Rip Van Winkle), Love in the Woods (Pocahontas and John Smith — the *false* myth), The White Woman

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with a Tomahawk (Hannah Duston the Indian-killer), and The Good Companions in the Wilderness (Alexander Henry and Wawatam, Natty Bumpo and Chingachgook). These are traced with fine ingenuity through the disguises and sentimentalizations by which we have tried to veil their darker implications, as in the wonderful demonstration of how Pocahontas becomes both an angelic She-Redeemer and the Indian Maid of smutty folklore and satiric Anti-Western fiction. For Fiedler, one of whose purposes is to defend the mythopoeic gift against tenderfoot snobs like James, Eliot and Leavis, the patterns add up to "the "archetypal Westerner whose legend is the essential myth of America":

> Henry and Natty and Rip together constitute the image of the runaway from home and civilization whom we long to be when we are our most authentic selves; Dame Van Winkle and Hannah and Eve add up to the image of his dearest enemy, spokesman for the culture and the European inheritance he flees; Wawatam and Bampico and Chingachgook and the Old Serpent himself make up the Good Companion, representative of an alternative past embracing which he can achieve a future available to no European. Yet it is a melancholy myth the three define, for all its hopefulness; since the Indian, midwife and mother to the New Son whose father is his Old World self, dies giving birth — "vanishes" without a surviving bodily heir in order to leave room for his spiritual offspring.

You either like such talk or you don't, I suppose; for me the beauty of Fiedler's way is not in such broad vistas but in surprising glimpses of particular literary moments, passages of Meriwether Lewis' journal, Thoreau on Hannah Duston, the ending of *Torrents of Spring*. Fiedler doesn't explain our whole history quite as tidily as he pretends to, but he helps us with it, moment by moment.

But like a familiar kind of academician, he's overanxious that his view of the past also seem up to date, Relevant to Our Times not just in showing how we got that way but in prescribing what to do next. The last chapters of *The Return of the Vanishing American* stress "return," arguing that for all the wit and point of the satiric Anti-Westerns of John Barth, James Leo Herlihy, Thomas Berger, Leonard Cohen and others, the West is really used up as a literary subject and setting, as it's used up in a reality of superhighways, motels and gift shops; with that understood, and after a welcome debunking of Science Fiction and a dismaying celebration of Ken Kesey as our authentic novelist, he can at last make the pitch one feared all along was coming:

> If a myth of America is to exist in the future, it is incumbent on our writers, no matter how square and scared they may be in their

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> deepest hearts, to conduct with the mad just such a dialogue as their predecessors learned long ago to conduct with the aboriginal dwellers in the actual Western wilderness. It is easy to forget, but essential to remember, that the shadowy creatures living scarcely imaginable lives in the forests of Virginia once seemed as threatening to all that good Europeans believed as the acid-head or the borderline schizophrenic on the Lower East Side now seems to all that good Americans have come to believe in its place.

That last sentence (the last in the book) rings hollow with its careful parallelisms and balances and its ponderous instructive tone; it's often the slow-curve artists who show you a lot of arm, and the rhetorical windup makes you wonder if Fiedler really trusts his stuff here. When critics begin to tell writers what is incumbent on them, something is wrong.

A program for redeeming and pereptuating a myth seems odd coming from someone who stakes so much on myth as the articulation of *unconfessed* assumptions and desires. Surely the last thing that can preserve the mythic force of American or any other literature is a calculated artistic regimen for *making* new cultural cases do the work of old ones. Fiedler is like the dean of a newly established college I once worked at, who appointed a committee to invent some "traditions" for the place; it's one thing for Fiedler to say that "The 'New Race' which Lawrence foresaw (and toward which, with or without benefit of literature, we are moving at an astonishing rate) demands a New Myth," but quite another for him to legislate, more or less in cold blood, what that myth shall be.

A literary anthropologist should be the first to insist that a kind of literature doesn't lose its mythic force just because it's not being written, right now, somewhere down the street. It's admirable of Fiedler to be concerned about the New Savages and to insist that we have literary commerce — intercourse, he might say — with them; but of course we'll do that anyway, not in order to preserve "the essential myth of America" (even if Fiedler is right about what that is) but because they are real people, interesting and disturbing ones who may help us understand the present and what it could lead to and whose experience matters because it is human experience. In the process of imagining their lives we indeed may find some affinity to our best imaginings of Indians, the alien others who challenge us to consider alternative histories and new selves in the present; but serious art always effects alteration of consciousness, and it needn't be *about* alteration of consciousness in Fiedler's sense to do its job.

Fiedler's idea of myth is dangerous to his anthropological intentions:

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> It is only a dream, perhaps, this vision of love and reconciliation between the races whose actual history is oppression and hate; but it is a dream we do not willingly surrender, our dearest myth, sustained by the faith Thoreau himself expresses at the end of the chapter in which he recounts the legend of Henry and Wawatam: "But in my dream ideal justice was at length done . . . and I was unspeakably soothed and rejoiced . . . because in dreams we never deceive ourselves, nor are deceived. . . . Our truest life is when we are in dreams awake."

"Dream" is a perilous metaphor, and Thoreau's ambiguous last sentence comes awkwardly into Fiedler's context: do we find our truest life when we conduct our waking selves in accordance with the justice we learn in dreams, or when we extend dreaming into waking life, treating it *as if it were* a place of justice rather than the unjust place reason and feeling report it to be? One hopes the former, but without being sure that Fiedler always sees it that way — the vision is "our dearest dream" all right, but how dear and soothing and rejoiceful can it be to the Indians, or to the Negroes, whom Fiedler irritatingly keeps treating as Indians in disguise? The book has an epigraph from Lévi-Strauss, stressing his compassionate concern for the dying people he has worked with and (by implication) insisting on the integrity of their styles of organizing their experience, whose validity and dignity is independent of our usually patronizing and distorting ways of apprehending them. Fiedler knows this, and certainly he has respect and compassion for the Indians, but his anthropology requires that they mostly be figures of *our* myths, creatures of our guilts and dreams, whose mythic status as psychic redeemers is only made possible by an actual history of genocidal horror. One wonders how the acidheads and borderline schizophrenics feel about becoming the mythic matter of the New Western — is *that* the best way to take their experience seriously?

In short, I don't think that Fiedler's way of treating myth is as easily transferable into prescriptive program as he wants it to be. His methods do damage not just to literature, by breaking up whole works to salvage the "authentic" fragment, but to life, making it only a kind of *materia mythica* to be arranged and manipulated without entering very deeply into the particular experiences that compose it. He doesn't mean to do this, and his career is a deserved and salutary rebuke to those who would insulate art from its human motives and consequences; but *The Return of the Vanishing American*, for all its admirable intentions and its achieved pleasures and illuminations, is finally bad medicine.

Thomas R. Edwards

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THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS

EXILE. By Peter Weiss. A Seymour Lawrence Book. Delacorte Press. $5.95.

ABOVE GROUND. By Jack Ludwig. Little, Brown and Company. $6.95.

TELL ME HOW LONG THE TRAIN'S BEEN GONE. By James Baldwin. The Dial Press. $5.95.

NUMBERS. By John Rechy. Grove Press, Inc. $5.00.

GRASSE 3/23/66. By Nicholas Delbanco. J. B. Lippincott. $4.50.

ONWARDS! By Nat Hentoff. Simon and Schuster. $3.95.

NIGHTMOVERS. By Jack Dunphy. William Morrow & Co., Inc. $5.95.

LES BELLES IMAGES. By Simone de Beauvoir. G. P. Putman's Sons. $4.95.

Autobiography is one of the staples in the novelist's cupboard, a deceptively simple ingredient. As a way of ordering the external world, personal history has the immediate value of substituting for more complicated structures the plotless, often illogical story of a life. Since there is no arguing with the life that lies beneath an autobiographical fiction our judgment is directed to the sensibility of the writer — his observation and above all his honesty. *Exile* by Peter Weiss is a brilliant example of the tension which can be set up between a highly personal voice and public events — a tension which becomes the dramatic force of the novel. There is never a moment when the outside world of political exile and alienation becomes mere window dressing for the young man's personal quest for identity and freedom. The Storm Troopers marching in the street, the screaming over the loudspeaker are a part of the scene, but only a part, for history is entangled with his memories of daily life and private disaster. With an expert sense of pacing, Weiss shifts from the deliberate consideration of the boy's Jewish heritage to an impassioned account of his sister's death.

> I still only grasped my lostness, my uprootedness. I was still far from taking my fate into my own hands, and making the fact of my not belonging a source of power for a new independence. Before we left the country and began our journeyings across many frontiers Margit died. On the day her dying began our house was like a greenhouse in the muggy heat before a thunderstorm.

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Suddenly the atmosphere and total feeling of that day are re-created in detail and we are left with the evidence that the events of our lives take precedence over the events of the world.

Weiss has written the history of a sensitive young refugee discovering the guilt which is part of his freedom as though it were the major theme in a larger and more intricate story. The narration is decidedly *post facto*, controlled and sympathetic though never sentimental, and the hard truth which emerges is that wisdom is hindsight, that it is only after the young man has muddled and misunderstood his life that it can be pieced together with such artistry. This narrative presence controls the novel with an authority that is sometimes intrusive. The intensity of the boy's adolescent break from his family, the despair with his first paintings are never given full rein. They are described in magnificent detail but with a singularity of tone which is ill-fitting. This is a small difficulty, indeed, in a novel which, though it abounds in running analysis, remains completely free of cant and pomposity. Weiss's narrator is as honestly absorbed in a definition of guilt as his past self is in admitting to it — and he will not allow his expiation to turn into back-handed heroics. In considering the extent of his personal failure towards a girl he has halfheartedly tried to save from the Nazis, he confesses:

> While she was being robbed of everything, I was deceiving myself with the delusion of a permanent home and property. There was nothing more I could do for Lucie: I had never been able to do anything for her and had at most increased her suffering by pointless hope. Now I knew nothing more of her existence and did not want to know anything more of it, but I shut myself off from this fate for which I too had been destined, but which I had escaped through no act of my own, and I had long since betrayed Lucie, the prisoner condemned to death, with a live free girl. . . .

The novel brings the artist (both painter and writer like Weiss) past a marriage based on a false identity, and through a final visit to his parents who are mired in the heavy bog of a middle-European living room which they have dragged about on their travels and festooned with familiar *haute bourgeoise* inadequacy. He arrives at a point where he feels free of the past. He sees his exile to be as much self-imposed and personal as it is an historic fact. There is great drama in the final proclamation of individual freedom when the narrator comes to the end of the story, his voice and that of the protagonist become one.

In *Above Ground*, Jack Ludwig assumes the persona of an engaging narrator, Joshua, who again offers no more plot than the random events

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of his life sorted out in striking scenes. Most of his youth is spent in hospitals observing death and being patched up for a life which is never a sure thing. He grows up in Canada, in an immigrant Jewish family full of characters larger than life. But then *Above Ground* is a blowup: encounters with the fruit vendor are elaborations, family feuds are on a grand scale. It's all in the telling, and Joshua is a gifted raconteur. Indeed, the novel seems based on a Scheherazade principle — that by spinning out stories, by endowing the world with his own heightened sense of existence, Joshua is extending his own life. This puts a great strain on Ludwig's performance and turns his novel into a concert program. We want to be held, not merely entertained, by his range and depth of feeling. Much of the time he can sustain it. Nearly all the characters in a great list of players, are magic evocations — the parents, the uncles, the cousins, the neighborhood types live in a world that is fully imagined with the richness of its own histories and consequences, but when the novel depends on the purely random and sequential, even the vitality of Joshua cannot endow it with more than a surface excitement.

> "Hey," [he says to his patient wife who's been shelved while he's pursuing extracurricular affairs with co-eds advanced even for California] "How about chucking this town."
>
> "Great! I've been waiting for you to say something like this." [There *is* a short exchange between them which lets us know that she's been having a bad time of it, but the momentum is all.]
> "O.K." he replied. "We'll go East and make a life."
>
> "Terrific!"

Strangely enough, the hero's love affairs, which are supposed to give him his sense of life, renewal and engagement, turn into dull myths. One girl is tender, one tough-minded, another neurotic and rough. Though Ludwig tries hard to give them dimension, they are flat. It's not that the reader is reluctant to enter Joshua's fantasies, but that they are out of proportion. Ludwig lets his man get sidetracked by the sirens. The scenes of his mother's decline and death show the real strength of Jack Ludwig's prose. If at times the material is weak, the performance in *Above Ground* is grand; the design enriches a mode which might be labeled American existential. The novel is immensely entertaining, never frivolous. Joshua says in the end: "Man lives bounded by death: that by itself sobers his parties."

From two remarkably honest writers, we turn to James Baldwin.

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He Needs UNICEF...
UNICEF Needs You!

Transworld Photo
by David Robison

The tragedy of Nigeria is written in the eyes of this small Ibo boy, and millions like him, caught in a hopeless civil war.

By midsummer, when the world awoke to their plight, the United Nations Children's Fund had been at work for several months bringing emergency relief to children and mothers trapped on both sides of the fighting lines. Over 5,000 tons of food and medical supplies have already been delivered by UNICEF, in co-operation with the International Committee of the Red Cross and volunteer church groups, to Biafra and to the areas under Federal control. More is on the way, severely straining UNICEF's resources.

Moreover the need for UNICEF's help will continue unabated long after the fighting ends. Once immediate needs for food and medicines are met, UNICEF must re-establish its basic health services and other long-range aid programs disrupted by the civil war.

The first full shipload of 5,000 tons of food gathered by UNICEF was loaded aboard the Orient Exporter in Houston, Texas. The shipment of powdered milk, oil, and CSM (corn-soy-milk blend) arrived in Nigerian waters in early September.

You can help. Send your check or money order to UNICEF, care of United Nations, New York 10017. Mark it for Nigeria/ Biafra Relief.

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In *Tell Me How Long the Train's Been Gone,* he's fudging all the way. Leo Proudhammer, a Negro celebrity (actor not novelist) suffers a heart attack on stage at the height of his career, forcing him to a lengthy playback of his life. The boyhood in Harlem is well done. After that it's a Hollywood success story that ends in dreamland — "Barbara had rented a penthouse, and her wide, wide windows faced the bay." While awaiting the arrival of his young love, Black Christopher, he is attended by his former white mistress who has earned equal billing on stage and screen but has slipped to a warm matronly role in his affections. They've had their ups and downs, but the limp Noel Coward banter they've developed keeps them in a colloidal harmony.

> She [at the bedside]: "How nice to have you back."
>
> He: "It was worth the journey . . . just to have you say that."
>
> She laughed again, "Dear Leo!"
>
> "I have the feeling that you're making fun of me, but I don't know why."
>
> "Because you're funny," she said.
>
> "*Bon. Bravo pour le clown.*"

Oh well, this may be the worst of it, but they did once start out as stage-struck kids stealing out of the supermarket and went through all those wrenching scenes from "Pinky" and "Gentlemen's Agreement."

With young Christopher, however, the great star is tuned in on Youth, Black Power: "Christopher and his friends, boys and girls, dancing to the hi-fi set. They were teaching me a great deal; made me wonder where I'd been so long. . . ." There is a coda in which Baldwin's hero, like some Westchester dad, is taken by his boy to a discothéque to observe what's happening, and before his departure for that much-needed rest on the Riviera (contract signed for the next big film), dear Leo is agreeing that his young cat does need guns — that's what's happening, too.

Good roles here for Sidney Poitier and Anne Bancroft. Baldwin, by the way has taken the trouble to assure us, in a *Look* piece on Sidney that the actor is not the model for his hero. That article has a lot to say, in a confused way, about how fame, the big money and the obligations of race contribute to the films of one and the novels of the other.

The photograph of John Rechy on the jacket of his book *Numbers* is the very image of his hero Johnny Rio (J.R.!), a "very butch number" who in turn admires himself in the mirror. Lest any delightful Nabokovian game of identity is suggested, it should be noted that the narcissism

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displayed between the photo on the front of *Numbers* and the drawing of the author on the back is utterly puerile and unreflective. To prove his sexual desirability, the hero sets out to be had thirty times in ten days. Johnny Rio makes it: as a novelist Rechy doesn't. Any literary notions that might raise this book to discussable pornography are inflationary.

Knowing that the first-person stance can lead to some pretty empty posturing, Nicholas Delbanco assumes it in his non-novel *Grasse 3/23/66*. A little knowledge is a dangerous thing (this nightmare of meretricious prose would drive anyone to commonplace), and so we never really know who the tortured soul is who beleaguers us with 139 pages of creative writing, though the clues lead directly to Harvard Square. The pretensions are Joycean. In a recent article in *Encounter*, Daniel Cory quotes Ezra Pound on *Ulysses*: "He said 'the job had been done once and for all'; and that it would be futile for anyone to attempt that kind of a work again." In the case of *Grasse 3/23/66* the model is *Finnegans Wake*:

> . . . The pupil and the apple of his sty, glazed gaze. . . . Fine me an honest man to slake me every slackening, to line. . . .
>
> What mockery is this, that I, enranged, can merely rag, and then a red rag weave and wave to no bull's eye? (What wanton soup to gourmand gods, who scruple-scraple, offered mess are we?)
>
> An artistry is honesty, so honesty is art. Imperious, impervious, avid or pavid, we swap our stories (darn good yarn, crayon, rayon), knit wit and wash our mouths with lye.

John Lennon did all this, diffidence of a deity, in (dentured) differential, a few years back, for love and money.

After Nicholas Delbanco's obsessive paronomasia and James Baldwin's artless dodging of the issues, it is a delight to turn to Nat Hentoff's *Onwards!*, a novel of simplicity and consequence. The story is superbly focused on the current political scene — that's what Nat Hentoff is writing about, and by never puffing his novel into a literary occasion he has achieved a small, exemplary work of art. His hero, a fortyish New York City academic, finds himself torn between the ineffectual dramatics of the old liberals with their nostalgic yet affecting sense of history and the tasteless aggression of the New Left babies with their justifiable urgency. All the "characters," though briefly done, have a surprising depth, and Hentoff's statement is perfectly pointed. Some obvious pitfalls for an indulgent farce — the academic world, the spectacle of New York intellectuals — are avoided by a determined honesty. The tone is light

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throughout: the great sit-in contains all the hilarious horror of a major political cartoon — a Hogarth or Gilray. One of the many small wisdoms of *Onwards!* is that Hentoff's man uses hip language with a fitting embarrassment. Like a good eighteenth-century satirical pamphlet the novel frankly has a message: our commitments, even if they fall short of fashion, must be felt. Beware of *credo*: it is a counterfeit of personal responsibility.

Retreating from the concerns of the day, Jack Dunphy has written a comfortable and thoroughly old-fashioned novel, *Nightmovers*, about a couple of lonely types, a childless Irish-American widow and a beguiling boy, will-o'-the-wisp, who appears to take her for all she's worth, but instead leaves her with more than she ever thought she had. It's a happy formula, but *Nightmovers* is loose-jointed. People wander in with their problems like the characters in a good TV serial. The novel is admirably straightforward, nicely laid out but so bland, finally, that the mind wonders off the page to discover what's missing: the intensity and strangeness of Carson McCullers' misfits, the terrible events of Flannery O'Connor's tales, the scope of a big Irish-American novel by Edwin O'Connor. Sometimes Dunphy's observations are stunningly correct — about Brooklyn in the old days, the familiar parish, the charming priest, once powerful, fallen from grace in the eyes of the world.

One of the difficulties in *Nightmovers* is a confusion of sensibilities, the common cold of quite good writing, which we have come to ignore. Too often the Irish widow is overly articulate, subject to Dunphy's sophistications which become her sophistries. Simone de Beauvoir should know how to avoid this confusion. In *Les Belles Images*, she stands, a staunch intellectual, at arms length from the fripperies of her heroine's world. Mme. de Beauvoir has lectured us on so much in the past, but she has instructed us in particular on the paltry trappings of the bourgeoise, on the follies of the fashionable life, so we *must* know that she has little use for the rich Parisiennes, a kind of *coterie de Caravelle*, that she picks up with in her new novel. Still, her pages are embroidered with enough Spanish Provincial, *toile*, Chanel and Balenciaga to delight the fiction editor of any ladies' magazine. There is constant disapproval, to be sure — she can even take the fun out of Christmas shopping on the Faubourg Saint-Honoré with her feminine psychology — but *someone* has taken these empty people seriously, has described their tantrums and their routine bitchery. Someone has, I'm afraid, entered the mind of her heroine with suspicious ease.

Laurence, the young matron facing up to her crisis, keeps languidly

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reaching out for the terrible news of the day — the end tables are strewn with *L'Express* and *Le Monde*, but she never quite makes it past *Votre Maison*. Her thoughts often center on interior décor and the book is smartly done up with a looking-glass motif. Laurence speculates, answering her own question: "Who was hiding behind those reflections that spun in the mirrors? Maybe nobody at all." In the end she rises up on principle and insists that her daughter be allowed to carry on a disturbing adolescent friendship with a Jewish girl. Bravo! Though Laurence's problems seem suburban to us, they have captured Mme. de Beauvoir. After one rowdy scene she observes — "Oh, all the pictures had been shattered to pieces, and it would never be possible to put them together again. Laurence wanted to take a tranquilizer too; she needed all her clarity of mind." The tranquilizers would have done nicely — a novel was excessive.

Maureen Howard

WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

THE CRISIS OF THE NEGRO INTELLECTUAL. By Harold Cruse. William Morrow. $8.95.

Even the title of this book constitutes a kind of heresy in that liberal tradition which maintains that the community of "intellectuals" is raceless and shares only work-related problems of methodology, analysis, craftmanship, for it sets up a "class" of black intellectuals with common problems not shared by nonblacks.

Mr. Cruse perceives the crisis to be one of identity and function; and he is justly impatient with the kind of statement that was current among black writers only quite recently: "I don't want to be a black writer, I want to be a writer." To outline this "crisis" in its contemporary complexity, Mr. Cruse finds it necessary to range over a number of large questions affecting the black community, each of which deserves separate treatment. The book is simultaneously a history of Harlem political movements, a discussion of the ethnic origins of American popular culture and of the implications of cultural pluralism in American society, an account of the ideologies emerging from the black community's attempts to define itself and its relationship to the

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society, a critical review of assorted black writers and artists and a rather overstated criticism of the role of white radicals — particularly Communists — in obstructing the evolution of an autonomous, indigenous black radicalism in Harlem in the thirties and forties. The eclecticism — both in subject and method — tends to obscure the intent and blur the focus of the work.

One consequence of the inherent and pervasive irony in the situation of blacks in this country can be seen in the fact that Cruse is not entirely successful in escaping some of the very same contradictions for which he so mercilessly and much of the time unjustly flays the entire tribe of black intellectuals. He attacks the middle-class programs and intellectual timidity of integrationist leaders as not relevant to the needs and aspirations of the masses. And he dismisses with less justification two generations of black writers, artists and performers, who by virtue of their success have "integrated" the cultural mainstream and abandoned, or "diluted" for white consumption, the cultural possibilities of the black community. Yet his own book had to be published "downtown," has been mostly reviewed in white journals and is clearly not directed to the black masses. He certainly should be more charitable.

More to the point, *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual* is guilty of the failure for which Mr. Cruse roundly denounces everyone else. The book presents no detailed, programmatic, analytical proposals for implementing the political and economic autonomy, psychological coherence and cultural integrity of the black community — and this is the solution it calls for. The lack is particularly regrettable, for it tends to cloud the virtues of the book. Like Eldridge Cleaver's *Soul on Ice,* Malik Shabazz's *Autobiography,* certain of LeRoi Jones' essays and the work of other young black writers, the book is remarkably free of academic shibboleths, doctrinal strictures and dogmatic pieties characteristic of much of the writing on "the question" by Establishment "commentators" of both races. Because the perspective of the book comes out of the black community it looks outward to American society; there is a kind of reversal, and Cruse is able to challenge certain facile and platitudinous formulas built into the critical terminology of the experts, which have long ceased to describe social realities (if they ever did). But provocative and important observations are left unexplored here and are, at times, almost lost in a deluge of pointless and petty acrimony; the promise of the early sections is never redeemed.

There appear to be two central assumptions from which Cruse works. The first is that the identity crisis and cultural confusion which he finds at the heart of most of the black community's problems is a

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direct result of the failure of black intellectuals to appreciate the relevance to the black community of cultural and ethnic pluralism in "white" society, and an attendant failure to perceive fully the relationship of the black community to its own heritage, history and culture, and the real relationship between that culture and the society as a whole.

The second assumption is that the rhetoric of integration—by its assumption of cultural homogeneity within white society, its effective negation of the black culture and its lack of a serious commitment to developing the economic, political and social possibilities of the ghetto — is responsible for prolonging the rape of the black community by the agencies of white exploitation.

Had Cruse devoted the book to a detailed exposition of the historical process leading to this situation — he makes only a gesture in that direction — or to a methodical exploration of the programmatic implications of this analysis, this work could have been a major contribution to our understanding of where the black community is, how it got there and what we need to be doing.

What is frustrating is that time and again Cruse seems to be hovering on the brink of such a breakthrough, only to fall into tendentious and largely irrelevant accounts of sectarian infighting among Harlem radicals or rancorous, often biased attacks on randomly selected figures like Paul Robeson, W. E. B. Dubois, Baldwin, Wright, Hansberry, John O. Killens, Sammy Davis, Jr., the editors of *Freedomways,* and a long list of contributors to various Harlem journals, most of whom are victims of wilfull and purposeless sniping. It is perhaps this obsession with the truly Byzantine maze of Harlem radicalism during the past fifty years — Cruse's justification is that Harlem is "the intellectual and cultural capital" of black America — that is the most unfortunate limitation of the book. For one thing Harlem's claim to preeminence, once legitimate, is now questionable. Demographic patterns in the black community during World War II have changed things. Moreover, Harlem is the only major black community without a black or predominantly black university, and in cities like Washington, Chicago, Detroit and notably Atlanta, where there are at least four, the university has had some effect on the cultural and intellectual climate among black people.

In any event, the absence of any discussion of the by now clichéd failure of the black college to define and preserve a coherent cultural identity for black people is a serious omission in a book on this subject. An intensive analysis of the division caused in the black community by white educational institutions, which, by instilling middle-class values, aspirations, life styles and attitudes toward the black community, create

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a kind of domestic brain-drain of black professionals, is long overdue. It is to this point that Mr. Cruse's discussions of the tensions between integrationist and nationalist sentiments, and the possibility of cultural pluralism should logically have led.

Neither the black intellectual's "crisis" nor the problems of the community originate in the ideological shortcomings of individual figures, as Cruse's method might suggest. They arise from the role of the black colleges as conduits, steering black professionals into "the mainstream." The present foment on black campuses is a reflection of the growing resistance to this process on the part of both students and faculty. Out of this unrest on the campus could come an entirely new definition of the relationship between college and community, and a philosophy of education aimed at producing a new generation of black professionals responsive to the needs of the black community. This is an absolute prerequisite of any social and cultural revolution in the ghetto. The responsibility of black intellectuals is to speed up this development, help create new political and economic organizations, and new cultural institutions. At the same time, they must undertake — in every relevant academic discipline — the critical reevaluation of the entire body of scholarship affecting race relations in the society. It is the black intellectual's responsibility to rescue our black history from the deprecations of a self-justifying white guilt, to forge a new consciousness based on the truths of our history and culture, and begin to envision the form of our new community.

Because of his failure to deal specifically with these goals, Mr. Cruse lost an opportunity to make a major theoretical and practical contribution. For it can only be a matter of time before the society realizes that it is more desirable, and in the long run cheaper, to allow the black community the freedom and the resources to reconstruct itself in terms of its own choice. The alternative is armed occupation, and that is no alternative.

Michael Thelwell

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THE SOUND OF SILENCE

LAUGUAGE AND SILENCE. By George Steiner. Atheneum. $8.00.

George Steiner's *Language and Silence* is a collection of essays and reviews culled from work written over the past nine years. The fashion, it seems, is for critics to present, like painters and writers, one-man shows of their work. Since our age is dominated by the magazine and the paperback, both of which encourage composing for the moment or the occasion, such exhibitions are inevitable, for what man could resist the opportunity to collect his own footprints from a vanished terrain? Happily, in some cases, such collections, when they emerge in book form, disprove the myth that literary journalism cannot be serious and rewarding. On the other hand the writer runs the risk — if he is neither an Edmund Wilson nor a V. S. Pritchett, or if he is not prudent enough to realize the special burdens of a book, and revise and rethink accordingly — of displaying a certain glib shrewdness in place of considered judgment. Partly because Steiner is not an especially accomplished essayist, and partly because the burdens of a book have not been generally accepted, Steiner rises only at times above the former category, and only rarely manages the latter.

These thirty-one essays, which range from Kafka to McLuhan, from Shakespeare to Schoenberg, from Marxism to pornography, are of a much more autobiographical and personal nature than, say, Steiner's study on Tolstoy and Dostoevsky. In their abiding concern with the fate of Humanity and the Humanities, these essays quite clearly set out the author's own personal history. Thus to an unusual extent we are invited to judge the man as separate from the critic. Indeed, the book is at its best when the voice is purely autobiographical, as in the essay, "A Kind of Survivor." *Language and Silence* also contains the author's premises for his general approach to literature, as well as many samples of specific analyses of works. (It is unfortunate in this respect that Steiner the critic is so often a professor in his writings, that the strain of didacticism runs so deeply throughout the work.)

Let it be said immediately that Steiner's main concerns are important ones, and that many of his marginal comments or attacks are

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aimed accurately. These large concerns center upon the ominous fate of literature, and especially language in modern society, shrouded as it is by the catastrophe of twentieth century history. One aspect of the problem is stated this way:

> If the relationship of literary studies and literary awareness to the ensemble of knowledge and expressive means in our society has radically altered, so surely has the confident link between literature and civilized values. This, I think, is the key point. The simple yet appalling fact is that we have very little solid evidence that literary studies do very much to enrich or stabilize moral perception, that they *humanize*. We have little proof that a tradition of literature studies in fact makes a man more humane.

But although Steiner is at pains to repeat that he is interested in examining the injurious effects of political inhumanity upon language, the book is more properly viewed as the effects of that inhumanity upon a modern literary sensibility, especially one with a central European background. For whatever material Steiner attends to — book, poem, novels, nonfiction, education, science — what lurks perennially in his mind is the holocaust of Nazism, the application of scientific technology for purposes of collective murder. Haunted by this nightmare, Steiner presents to us most memorably the portrait of the critic maimed, the critic whose discovery is less a blessing than curse, which presses relentlessly upon the consciousness and seems often to paralyze the act of criticism itself. Thus the paradox of Steiner the critic persistently breaking in upon his own criticism, with soliloquies that question the reason — and even the moral right — of the task before him.

As critic Steiner is provocative and wide-ranging, and he performs useful tasks. We live in a culture that is characterized by quantity and excess, by that which is *kitsch* and that which parades as avant-garde, and any criticism that is antibiotic is necessary and welcome. Steiner's remarks throughout on the overall irrelevance of academic literary criticism, on the devaluation of the word and the ascendance of the image or picture, on the general debasement of the idea of culture in America, are a sober corrective to those paeans of praise sung by the many eager celebrators of our culture. "To Civilize Our Gentlemen," though dispersed and abortive, is a literate attack on the stifling narrowness of assumptions that all too frequently govern departments of English literature in Britain and America (although, it might be added, the unseen enemy is the idea of mass education). In "Marxism and Literature," a group of seven essays that focus mainly on the achievement of Georg Lukács, Steiner rescues from oblivion, for many Anglo-American scholars,

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important Marxist literary critics, like Ernst Bloch, T. W. Adorno and Walter Benjamin.

It is plain that Steiner has read widely, and that his criticism is the result of deeply felt concerns. Yet it is precisely because he touches upon important subjects, because the promise of deep insight is here, that the overall failure is so disappointing.

There are to begin with the minor irritants. We are disappointed that Steiner, himself a persistent critic of academic smallness, should so frequently fall victim to his own accusation. What some have described as profound is better termed pompous (consider the title, or a line like "The book we begin tomorrow must be as if there had been none before; new and outrageous as the morning sun . . ."). What *Time* applauds as "erudite" is more appropriately viewed as pedantry (see the philological and etymological asides, the untranslated German quotations). Then there is his rather compulsive habit of speaking as if there were a podium before him, so that whether the subject be logical positivism, theories of musical harmony, Leibniz or abstract art, we are sure to receive lengthy lectures along the way. Rhetorical epigrams are more often cryptic than clarifying: "style is . . . the inward place of Durrell's meaning." The repetitions are endless: the skepticism concerning the humanities' power to humanize, the litanies praising Hermann Broch, the "discovery" of Wittgenstein, the adulation of Central European culture. Was all this necessary? Couldn't some of the essays have been left out, or revised and combined?

More serious misgivings revolve around Steiner's critical judgment. Breadth is purchased at the cost of real depth, or satisfying development of themes. A Steiner essay quickly blurs with others and vanishes from memory. The force of a personal stamp — that distinguishes *this* particular essay from another critic's on the same subject, is not found in Steiner. As an essayist Steiner lacks the theoretical ability that is needed for the study of an idea, a movement or a complex figure, and he is also deficient in that easy grace of style and complete familiarity with context that raises the modest skill of contemporary reviewing into a rounded art. The essay on Leavis, for example, is not nearly as incisive as Trilling's early essay (1949). Trilling's crisp remarks about the myopia and rigidity in Leavis, resulting from the English class system, are far superior to Steiner's rambling appreciation. The review essay on Deutscher's biography of Trotsky is fitted ingeniously by Steiner upon a Greek stage, replete with long quotations from Aeschylus, much like a schoolboy's prize essay. It falls far short, however, in terms of actual political analysis or real personal drama, of Howe's essay on Trotsky. Indeed the charge

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that a Trotskyist regime "might well have been no less authoritarian and, at need, no less ruthless" than the Stalinist horror is the kind of cant one expects from the Hoover Institute, not from an intellectual who knows anything about the history of the Russian Revolution or the history of Trotsky's thinking. Finally, the overpraise of Durrell as an important man of letters (the main hope for the "renascence of the word") — despite Steiner's later attempt to mitigate this view — is a good indication of his gullibility as a critic of contemporary fiction.

The informative essays on Marxist literary critics are not without their problems. He correctly distinguishes between the aridity of the Leninist-Zhdanovite orthodox school and the more fruitful production of the "para-Marxist" critics, who look back to Engels for their legacy. But his groupings here are surprisingly indiscriminate. Certainly, in this latter group, the early Edmund Wilson is a far cry from Lucien Goldmann, and, in the first group, Arnold Kettle's work is surely not to be considered on the same level with that of Fast or Aragon. To be sure, Steiner's dichotomy is oversimple, or, to put it differently, his conception of para-Marxists is narrow and misleading. He doesn't seem to be sensitive to a whole group of literary critics who, while not often referring overtly to Marxian doctrine, nevertheless certainly proceed with underlying historical assumptions regarding the connections between literature and society which are drawn from Marxian ideology. I refer to writers who have appeared in *PR* over the past years (early Trilling, Phillips, Rahv, Erich Auerbach, Howe). Steiner remarks upon the particular difficulty that Dostoevsky has presented for Marxist critics, yet if we read, say, Rahv's essays on Dostoevsky, we are surely watching the kind of flexible and rewarding literary analysis that comes from a tacit but unmistakable familiarity with Marxian categories. It is curious that Steiner should spend so much time educating provincial Anglo-Americans on the possibilities of Marxist criticism, and that his own essays on specific writers, except for passing remarks, are so fundamentally devoid of these fruitful possibilities. Despite surface connections *Language and Silence* is a book of unrelated, contradictory tendencies.

For ultimately it is only with some vision, some commitment that transcends purely literary criteria, that the criticism can have real scope and relevance. Ironically, Steiner seems curiously oblivious to the true needs, so to speak, of his criticism. *Language and Silence* is scarred by political and historical memories — Hitler, the Nazi catastrophe, the charnel houses of Auschwitz, Belsen, Treblinka. Again and again we hear about the injury done to language by political bestiality, about the debilitating effects of Fascism upon the German language of the thirties. An

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entire section is devoted to Marxist critics and polemics, where the connections between literature and politics are of obvious and immediate relevance. Yet, strangely, for a book so deeply immersed in political subjects, one that is continually demanding political understanding and analysis, there is very little of either. Rhetorical appeals to vague humanistic ideals are a poor substitute. This absence is crucial, undermining seriously the coherence of the whole. *Language and Silence* remains vague and incomplete, impaired by critical confusion and misconception.

And, instead of pertinent analysis, there is a great deal of pontification concerning the nature and possibilities of *silence*. Now it is one thing to invoke the Muse of silence, another to have something to say to her once She arrives. That is, what *concretely* can be said about silence that will be of any real value? Indeed, one is surprised at how easily Steiner is taken in by his own metaphors. Repeatedly there are solemn pronouncements like, "Is the poet's verse not an insult to the naked cry?" (in reference to a response to bestial experience). Or, from his essay on Schoenberg's *Moses and Aron*:

> Moses' despairing cry, his collapse into silence, is that a recognition —such as we find also in Kafka, in Broch, in Adamov—that words have failed us, that art can neither stem barbarism nor convey experience when experience grows unspeakable.

Such statements convey at the very least great naïveté about the place of art in a society. Steiner vastly overestimates its power and misunderstands its goal. It is not the aim of art or literature to stem political barbarism; for this task, political, not artistic force is required.

There is evidence for believing that Steiner the man is sensitive to the inadequacies of the critic. That is to say, somewhat paradoxically, the sensibility here is wiser than the intelligence. I refer to the broken logic in many of these essays, where the present argument is intruded upon by bursts of anger and frustration relating to the past. (This gives the essays a choppy, uneasy quality that is particularly disconcerting.) As if memory alone, repeated often enough, could replace understanding; or assertion, analysis. Because Steiner means so well, it is unfortunate that that which appears to be criticism is really not so at all. It is lament and nostalgia, qualities which threaten no one and change nothing.

Alan Lelchuk

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THE MODERN ELEMENT

THE TURN OF THE NOVEL. By Alan Friedman. Oxford. $6.50.

THE PASSIVE VOICE. By Harold Kaplan. Ohio University Press. $5.00.

JOSEPH CONRAD AND THE FICTION OF AUTOBIOGRAPHY. By Edward Said. Harvard University Press. $4.95.

DESIRE, DECEIT, AND THE NOVEL. By Rene Girard. Translated by Yvonne Freccero. Johns Hopkins University Press. $6.95.

THE LIMITS OF METAPHOR. By James Guetti. Cornell. $6.50.

A community of faith is apparent in these recent studies of the novel: Conrad, Lawrence and Faulkner compose the Trinity; Melville, James, Hardy, Forster and Joyce are ancillary angels of varying magnitude. Hardly an audacious pantheon: all of these studies are concerned, not with the contemporary, but with the roots of our modernism, the most recent clearly definable "great tradition". One might surmise that a return to these great moral psychologists represented a somewhat reactionary gesture, a refusal of new avant-gardisms, more radical questionings of the place of character, psychology, movement and narrative in the novel. And yet what is most notable about the books by Guetti, Kaplan, Friedman and (in this case working with a European canon) Girard is their refusal of direct allegiance to the Masters: their attitudes are characterized by uncertainty, questioning, suspicion, to the extent that in the best cases their books become interrogations of their subjects, and of the novel itself. And of criticism as well: there is an evident refusal to remain within the ideal humility of the New Critic, an impatience with explication and exegesis, a commitment to literature as an act of consciousness engaged with the world — a commitment which entails a kind of personal struggle with the lessons of the Masters, and an attempt to work more or less ambitious personal critical syntheses, imaginative systems which want to break out from "literary criticism" to something else.

To take the simplest case first: in *The Turn of the Novel,* Alan Friedman starts from a perception about the structure of modern novels: that they are notably "open" in their resolutions, that no event or final recognition comes to close off what he calls the "stream of *conscience.*" The phrase is perhaps somewhat barbarous, but accurate and important: Friedman continually reminds us that the novel is about ethical ex-

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perience in movement, a process of disillusion, discovery, learning, where the characters' responses to experience allow them to reinterpret and redefine themselves. In a traditional novel (*Emma, Jane Eyre*) a moment comes — its favorite forms are marriage and death — when the stream is dammed, the expansion of conscience arrested, a repose and definition achieved, and we are not encouraged to look for any further process, or at least are given its definitive contours. Later in the nineteenth century — Friedman begins with Hardy, while conceding that first signs of the change can be found in Dickens, George Eliot and certainly Henry James — novelists begin to refuse to close off the stream of conscience: Conrad, Forster and Lawrence (and then Virginia Woolf, Joyce, Huxley, Hemingway) increasingly insist upon leaving their readers with an "unsatisfying" sense of flux, indeterminacy and future change, a sense that nothing has been terminated and everything opened up to a conscience which will have to face terrifyingly new developments of insight.

The argument is basically a simple, even an obvious one, but the book is no less engaging for this. Friedman's perception about structure permits him to read his novels with economy, freshness of vision and a feeling for their dynamic relevance one to another. It seems to me unfortunate, however, that Friedman is reluctant to deal resolutely with some of the most interesting issues his study raises or implies. Chief of these is the relation between fictional endings and the "life endings" to which they must in some manner be related. Friedman poses the question whether the primary term of his reality is a theory of life or a theory of fiction, only to answer that the two are inextricable. Perhaps; but this does not advance us toward a response to the primary question, psychological, sociological and aesthetic, of what the sense of an ending means to us — whether anything outside the confines of art seems to us, subjectively, finally closed (except death, and we have spent considerable effort definalizing that) — and hence what may be the status of the kinds of endings provided by novels, situated on the confines of art and experience. Do *Emma* and *Jane Eyre* betray experience (at least *our* experience), or reveal its profound structures by a superior, and satisfying, reordering? Why does the exit line James gives to Kate Croy — "We shall never be again as we were" — seem so perfectly responsive to some need in us both for conclusion and suspension? The logic and quality of Friedman's argument puts him before these questions, and his failure to explore them limits his book to *literary* criticism in a way it should not be — since implicitly is not — limited.

Harold Kaplan is philosophically more ambitious. *The Passive Voice* is a reflection on the solipsism of modern fiction, its passivity, its exclusive dedication to the ironic and comic perspective. Action, Kaplan

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argues, engages the ethical perspective, and the highest expression of the ethical is tragedy: Othello's final union with his own experience, Lear's final communication with Cordelia and his human condition. Tragedy is a product of a threatened or broken anthropocentric consciousness which yet preserves the will to action: the tragic *agon* becomes possible when the order of the universe has been challenged, but nothing new has come to take its place; hence the conclusion of tragedy is not overtly positive — no new meanings for life and the justice of God arrive — but rather "an interrupted sentence, an active verb without its full predication." With the passage to Romantic naturalism, the will to action is lost, the passive verb replaces the active, comedy and a stance of stoic naturalism bury tragedy. Kaplan has located (quite rightly, I think) the first decisive symptom of this passage in the novels of Flaubert: here knowing and acting are hopelessly split; authorial consciousness about life becomes an end in itself, a victory of the ironic perspective which kills not only the possibility of action but also any real ethical engagement. The demonstration is pursued through Joyce, Hemingway, Faulkner, Conrad and Lawrence — perhaps most perceptively in Conrad, whose emphasis on "character" is seen as an heroic attempt to negate solipsism and posit an implicit humanism.

Shades of Irving Babbit. Kaplan's values are indeed consciously humanistic and traditional. This is precisely the strength of the book, its commitment to a kind of Arnoldian high seriousness about literature and its ethical engagement. Yet the quality of Kaplan's general speculations is to a degree lost in his discussions of texts, which are far too much *commentary*: he has not found a methodological principle for locating his theme in the texts, and the result is a barrage of words — allegorization, in Northrop Frye's terms — around the text. The procedure is common enough, but more and more inadequate the larger the synthetic vision of the critic. Kaplan's book in fact poses with clarity a problem common to many such studies, where the ambition and richness of the overall structure or vision is betrayed by a technique of exegesis which remains faithful to a fragmented treatment of discrete novels one after another: where commentary — whose language, choices and exclusions depend on the synthesis — seems arbitrary to the novel taken in its autonomy; and the autonomy of the novels seems to subvert the synthesis and its language. Doesn't someone with Kaplan's concerns need a methodological principle which will allow him to reform all his discrete novels (and authors) into a larger structure, a sort of "meta-novel" which will reveal the essential constituents of the passive voice? Friedman, reading novels from the point of view of their endings, comes much closer to holding all the elements of his subject in a dynamic totality.

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Edward Said, who is of course dealing with only one author in *Joseph Conrad and the Fiction of Autobiography*, feels the need for a methodological principle; and since his subject is one man's fictional use of his spiritual development, Said's allegiance is to "psychographic" criticism, the analysis of "certain configurations in the author's consciousness, configurations that persist into and enliven the fictional creation." Said's analysis of consciousness is influenced by Sartre's; it aims, I think, to preserve Conrad's self-conception, the process of his self-awareness and his existential project as they inform his fiction. Very well. First of all Said attempts to reconstruct conception, process and project from Conrad's massively numerous correspondence. And here initial flaws develop: Said's comments on the letters give us phrases like "terrifying revelation" and "pessimistic vision of a remorseless process," or this sentence on Conrad's reaction to the War: "With anxious thoughts of the war often making him ill, he found himself in 1916 still uncertain of the exact course subsequent history would take." Are we to assume that a good antibiotic would have made him a Tiresias? The phrase is silly; it is of course perhaps mostly negligent, but with a negligence characteristic of the kind of lazy emotional adjectivism that is being presented as analysis of consciousness.

When Said turns to the fiction (the shorter fiction only: this, he claims, shows Conrad at his most controlled, most conscious, and provides an especially close parallel to the different spiritual phases defined by the letters), another problem arises: can you read your analysis of an author's consciousness into the texts while claiming to examine them as texts, in their artistic autonomy? A critic like Georges Poulet, in his attempt to seize and reconstruct the consciousness of a writer, makes no pretense at reading the writer's works as autonomous and complete units; he frankly violates their autonomy in search of something else, and does not subsequently try to reconstitute them as objects of *literary* analysis. It seems to me that Said is using two optics at once without being aware of it, and the result is an interpretive circle very like what we were used to in a more traditional "life and letters" biography: the fiction becomes a sort of spiritual thermometer for measuring Conrad's progress ("The Secret Sharer," "A Smile of Fortune," "Freya of the Seven Isles" are "reflections of Conrad's final, prewar unhappiness") and the readings of this thermometer are offered as analyses of the texts. At its best, Said's method gives an original interpretation of *The Shadow Line*; but mostly it seems to me dangerously to encourage psychological platitude.

In the quest for a methodological principle which will permit a synthesis beyond commentary and facile psychologizing, we are led to René Girard's *Desire, Deceit, and The Novel.* Girard's original percep-

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tion (Hegelian in origin) is important and promising: the presence in the novel of mediated or triangulated desire, whereby one desires only what is given value by another's desiring; where desire by another becomes desire to be the Other. "Man," according to Girard's epigraph from Max Scheler, "possesses either God or an idol"; idolatry of the Other is a product, once again, of Romantic naturalism, and the existence of mediated desire has been concealed from us by the romantic critic's insistence on individualism and autonomy, his apology for solipsism. Hence the "romantic lie" of Girard's French title (*Mensonge romantique et vérité romanesque*) is that literature (or criticism) which reflects mediated desire without revealing it, and the "novelistic truth" a superior literature which lays bare the presence of the mediator.

Girard's reading of Cervantes, Stendhal, Flaubert, Proust and Dostoevsky in terms of this structure often gives impressive results; his method is such that he can strike through to an essential configuration in each of these writers — most impressively to Stendhal's theory of vanity, and the dimensions of snobbism in Proust — and read them in conjunction with one another, as illuminating each other's engagement in essentially the same enterprise. Yet there is a persistent uncertainty as to where Girard has situated the reality he is talking about: is desire according to the Other a sociological fact with historical dimensions, a phenomenon of all consciousness, a phase of literary awareness? If it is all of these, how are they interrelated, and what is the primary term? Girard's vocabulary begins to trouble one: mediated desire is a "deviated transcendence" which "profanes" our "divine essence." The all-embracing framework is held back until his elucidation of the novelistic ending, which in all great novelists includes a renunciation of desire, a repudiation of Promethean pride, a transcendence which is both reunion with the desireless self and reconciliation with the Others: a reconciliation between the individual and the world, man and the sacred; a conversion in which the hero denies his past self and looks forward to a resurrection. Christian symbolism alone is universal, claims Girard, because it alone is capable of informing the novelistic experience — by which he means, I think, the experience of the novelist working on experience.

One grants that the great novelistic ending may record a new wholeness of the self, but isn't the word "transcendence" fraudulent? Transcendence toward what? Has the hero really become desireless (*vide* Friedman on Lawrence for an implicit rebuttal), or has he rather illuminated and focused his desiring? Does the conclusion in fact elicit denial of all the hero has been? Such a view gives curious status to all the experience dramatized in the book: Henry James claimed that the novelist worked from a love of his created life; Girard seems to suggest

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that he is finally motivated by hatred of it. The root of the problem is the Girardian conception of literature moving toward — and hence at its best fostering — a "conversion" and a "cure" for all of us who are living in the world of mirrors and mirages decreed by the romantic imagination, feeding on monstrous misinterpretations fed us by romantic critics and unauthentic novelists. Must our heroes renounce Prometheanism? If we have been romantics and sons of Prometheus for some time now, it is because Prometheanism seems the most admirable gesture in a world where *deus* is at best *absconditus* — especially when Prometheus is the artist. Kaplan's eminently sane humanism is a good antidote to Girard: humanism need not mean idolatry, investment of the Other with a "phantom divinity" which, according to Girard, is worshiped by all non-Christian systems. But Girard is a polemical anti-humanist, and indeed a reactionary. His trump card is of course Dostoevsky, and he closes his book by quoting Alyosha's fervent replies to the children at the end of *The Brothers Karamazov*: but can we be dismissed as romantic liars for finding equal force in Ivan's questions?

It is notable that Girard's argument leads him to a denial of "novelistic freedom" — the freedom of a novelist's characters from an aura of interference and manipulation by the novelist — held as a central artistic tenet by writers as diverse as Stendhal, Sartre and James: he confesses himself unable to see any sense in which a novelist's characters can be "free" if the novelist himself is. The "critics of freedom" have simply been blind to the presence of the mediator and the processes of metaphysical desire, which in fact control all novelistic life; freedom is an invention of those last romantics, the Existentialists. This argument — which preserves all the book's confusion about the locus of the structures it is discussing — seems to me both to vitiate much of Girard's psychological perceptiveness, and to reduce literature to something debased and possibly debasing. Girard's literature finally has little of the dynamism, agility and intellectual toughness which seem to me to define Stendhal, Proust and Dostoevsky; it finally too closely resembles therapy, or liturgy.

The kind of interrogation of literature worked by James Guetti in *The Limits of Metaphor* seems to me more subtle, more profound, infinitely more likable and finally — though Guetti starts, not with any philosophical structure but with the outlook and tools of empirical stylistic analysis — quite as radical. Guetti's argument is complicated, sometimes excessively involuted, and it is difficult to summarize. Essentially, he is concerned with the problem of imaginative failure in the modern novel: an attempt to overreach, to establish through metaphor "ineffable" significances which finally are beyond the reach of language and reveal its insufficiency. Beginning with *Moby Dick*, Guetti sets up a

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contrast between the languages used by Ishmael and Ahab: Ishmael's rhetoric is on the plane of simile, imaginative approximation, whereas Ahab's is on the order of metaphor, in that his "imaginative perceptions of the world become the reality of the world." If the play of these antithetical languages leads to Ahab's failure (implying Melville's judgment on the metaphorical imagination), it is the vehicle of the novel's success: its creation of a central impenetrability which makes the reader feel that a "dumb blankness" is "full of meaning."

We move to the "suggestive and futile approximations" of Marlow in "Heart of Darkness," which more radically suggest the limitations within language and an inability to penetrate to any "ineffable"; and to the "extended similes" of the narrators of *Absalom, Absalom!*, where the tension between language and a nonlinguistic reality becomes an insoluble tension within language itself, where the central problem is the narrators' efforts to compose a narrative reality, an effort which ends in defeat, and the paradox that a successful presentation of the imaginative problem the book considers can only be demonstrated in the failure to create any story at all. We are left with sheer verbal disorder, and the assertion that this is the result of trying to apprehend a "darkness" that cannot be made to exist in language. *Absalom, Absalom!* is to Guetti

> the most thoroughgoing of those works of fiction that call into question the possibilities of language and meaning; as an immense display of fallen language and as a revelation of the nature of this language, it seems unparalleled. In it Faulkner insists that, as Sutpen's active force and Quentin's imaginative vitality arise from and are exhibited in their failure, the greatest success of language itself is to create a potential of meaning that must remain unrealized, a tension between order and disorder that cannot be resolved but only repeated, and repeated. Language may be defined in this way, however, only because no meaning is ever achieved, because no metaphor is ever constructed.

Such observations open into Guetti's final chapter on "The Instability of Metaphor." This instability is inherent: to pursue the potential unity implied by a metaphor is to assure that metaphor's collapse, the end of its role as an ordering relation of two kinds of experience. Hence metaphor creates "pseudosignificances," expectations of meanings beyond words that can be neither satisfied nor sustained because the expectations can never be followed to resolution. This is the realization of Ishmael, of Ike McCaslin, of one half of Marlow's and Quentin's minds; whereas the other half, like Ahab, believes in the pursuit of meaning, to destruction. The idea of the wilderness — the sea, the jungle, the forest — allegorizes the situation of language: order is shown to be unsatisfying

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in regard to the wild and new, and at the same time this newness may seem to imply an order. Conrad and Faulkner finally use a language in which "the suggestion of order is maintained only because it is nearly lost in the richness of the imaginative experience which the metaphor presents." But, claims Guetti, to achieve this is to insist more and more on the unreality of the ordering and cognitive function of metaphor, hence of art. Metaphor becomes provisional and even "frivolous," a process of *as if* thinking, a self-delusive reconstruction of the illusion of order.

It is here that Guetti's complex, uncompromising argument becomes both most suggestive and most open to question, and I regret that he chooses to end it at this point. The next step, it seems to me, would be an interrogation of the validity of literature as a secular mime of incarnation and transcendence: a desperate attempt to create transcendence with symbol, which is in fact (since no transcendent realm, source of true symbols, really exists) metaphor which has achieved a state of totality and independence, a "monad" which may fail as metaphor but does have a cognitive function in that it has organized phenomena *toward* a "transcendence" which is in fact the work of art itself. Guetti's argument, like Kaplan's and Girard's, must at the last return us to a central problem in Romantic and Symbolist aesthetics; and to Melville, Conrad and Faulkner would have to be added Yeats and Mallarmé, Shelley and Rousseau. I am quick to add that Guetti's book is by no means undermined because he has not done so; it is perhaps more persuasive for his statement of the problem where it has least clearly been seen, in terms of works that are not so obviously open to the charges of hermetic aestheticism and narcissism.

Yet it is remarkable that ultimately almost all these critics — Guetti, Kaplan and Girard directly (if the last rather perversely), Friedman much less so — point beyond what they achieve, or even conceive to be their tasks, to an interrogation of the modern imagination in its act of consciousness and creation in a world of untranscendent phenomena, and pose implicitly the question of the role this imagination has assigned to itself and its productions. Hence they imply essential questions about the critical act in its relation to the creations of imagination. "The Age of Suspicion has come into the world," wrote Stendhal; suspicion now seems to be investing criticism, and this can only be a good sign, for, as Guetti's book most decisively suggests, what we need is not more exegesis or even analysis, but a questioning of language itself, and beyond language, of imagination and what it makes: some "meta-critiscism" of our imaginative consciousness.

Peter Brooks

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SCHOOL AND SOCIETY

EQUALITY OF EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY. By James S. Coleman, Ernest Q. Campbell, Carol J. Hobson, James McPartland, Alexander M. Mood, Frederick D. Weinfeld, and Robert L. York. U.S. Government Printing Office. $4.25.

One of the major questions now facing the nation is how to narrow the gap between the underclass of Negro and Spanish Americans and poor white and the affluent two-thirds. It is widely agreed that the cleavage which divides us is much more than economic; the underclass is characterized by a subculture, political inefficacy, educational deficiencies and psychological inhibitions. But education, it has seemed, might provide one lever for raising the level of minority and poor children, and thus helping them to break out of their rut. This was the assumption behind projects such as Head Start and other "compensatory" education projects, in which about 1,200 million dollars a year are still being invested.

The Coleman report, one of the most technically competent and extensive social science studies of this generation, financed and published by the government, provides some of the data we need for reexamining the results of new educational approaches. Nearly 600,000 American students in grades 1, 3, 6, 9 and 12 in 4,000 schools in 50 states were studied, along with their teachers, principals and superintendents. The students answered questionnaires about themselves, their educational aspirations and their backgrounds, and took various tests of educational achievement and ability; school personnel answered questionnaires; and highly sophisticated statistical tools and of course computers were used to analyze the data.

One of the incidental revelations of the Coleman report is that ten years after the Supreme Court's desegregation ruling about 80 per cent of all white children still attend schools that are 90 to 100 per cent white. About two-thirds of Negro students attend schools where most of the students are Negroes. Americans of Mexican, Indian, Puerto Rican and Oriental background are also segregated, although not to the same extent as Negroes. Teachers are segregated too, with white students attending schools where 97 per cent of the teachers are white.

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Much more surprising was that, *on the average*, schools attended by Negro and white children did not differ on objective measures of quality. This is, of course, a finding which was and will be most frequently challenged. The fact, though, is that the study used a very wide range of data, including information on the quality of teachers and many other factors. *Differences in quality between regions of the country were found to be higher than those between schools with differing ethnic or racial composition in any given area.* This has two implications. Simply investing more money in slum schools is unlikely to bridge the cleavage which separates America into two nations. Since the variance between schools within a given region is small, this factor obviously does not account for the large differences which exist in educational achievement.

Second, Southern education of children of all colors is neglected, and unless that region is somehow helped to catch up, Southern blacks will continue to weigh down the national averages for Negroes. And Southern whites will again and again slow down our capacity to help the underclass by voting against appropriate programs, for Southerners, it seems to us, have so far benefited less than other parts of the country from the liberalizing effects of education. Thus, their backwardness blocks greater federal aid to education, and this, in turn, sustains their conservative inclinations.

The most consequential finding of the study was the importance of social factors. Tests showed differences in verbal and nonverbal ability, reading comprehension, mathematics achievement and other subjects between Negro and white from grades 1 to 12, with Negro deficiencies ranging as high as 5 years in math achievement and 4 years in reading skills. Differences were *higher* in higher grades. Lest there is still someone who believes in difference of innate capacity, the study clearly shows that differences between minorities and other Americans are much higher in the South and Southwest than in the rest of the country; i.e., not race, but sub-socio-economic-cultural background determines the differences. It also shows that *the school system — in all regions of the country—does not reduce, but magnifies the differences children bring to it, from their homes.* As this holds for a large variety of school systems, *the* question the study raises, but does not answer, is to what extent, if any, we can rely on schools — however fortified they may become — for the transformation of America into a society of substantial if not complete social equality?

If there is any area through which one can enter the vicious circle of "lacks" that reinforce each other and hold back progress, it is not the school system, at least not the school system alone. Education, it is said —

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and this study supports the idea — is by itself a weak lever for societal change. The notion that small achievements will accumulate to make for gradual reforms is also challenged as the cleavages between the underclass and the affluent American seem to grow and the underclass becomes more and more nonwhite.

If a multifaceted, coordinated attempt at reform is to be made, those working on the educational front will probably draw on two considerations, one well documented in the Coleman report and one completely outside its domain. Coleman *et al.* show that the extent to which schools have a bridging effect is due to the upward pull of integrated classrooms; that is, Negroes in predominantly white schools do not pull down their fellow students' achievements, but rather are challenged by the white environment to higher achievements. This suggests that integration is not only a means of erasing the social evil of a color bar but also may serve to narrow the educational, and hence cultural and economic, cleavage. Second, recent studies conducted at Harvard, Chicago and elsewhere suggest the importance of reaching preschool children, if they are not to be almost hopelessly behind by the time they reach school age.[1] This is where the next major attempt to bridge the two "nations" may come, an area that the next Coleman report may well study.

Frankly, however, I am not sure that the cleavage can be bridged within the confines of the existing system; and I doubt that whatever *can* be achieved within its confines will be attained.

Amitai Etzione

RUSSELL, SAGE

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF BERTRAND RUSSELL: Volume I. Little, Brown and Company. $7.95.

In 1872, Kate Amberley, born a Stanley and married to Lord Amberley, the oldest son of Lord John Russell, gave birth to her third child, a son. Accordingly, she wrote to Helen Taylor, who since the death of her mother, Harriet Taylor Mill, had been looking after the then

1. Maya Pines, *Revolution in Learning: The Years from Birth to Six* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966).

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elderly, ailing and by now virtually canonized John Stuart Mill: "Do you mind god-mothering my little *boy*. . . ." She went on: "We hesitated to ask such a favor of Mr. Mill otherwise I wish he too cd. have been god-father for there is no one in whose steps I wd. rather see a boy of mine following in ever such a humble way, than Mr. Mill's." Helen Taylor not only assented to be the god-mother herself but added the great news: "Mr. Mill says if you wish it he does not think it would conflict with his opinions to enter into that relation. . . ." Later the customary cup, suitably inscribed, arrived in the Amberley household, making official the apostolic succession: Bertrand Russell god-son to John Stuart Mill. [These facts are not included in the *Autobiography*; they come from Packe's *Life of Mill*.]

No doubt Mill would not have approved of everything his god-son was to do in a long, and often tempestuous, life, but he would have seen with satisfaction that the great tradition of rationalism and reform that had its inception in the eighteenth century and that was passed on in England from Bentham to James Mill to John Stuart Mill had found in Bertrand Russell an eminently worthy champion, in many ways the most doughty and intransigent of all. Russell himself has, of course, always been aware of this and rightly considers himself the last Victorian. Early on at Cambridge when he first came in contact with a younger generation, such as Strachey and Keynes, he said, "We were still Victorians; they were Edwardians. We believed in ordered progress by means of politics and free discussion."

So this is the first volume (1872-1914) of the autobiography of the last of the big men of the nineteenth-century ethos. It should be said first that Bertrand Russell's life has been so long, so varied and so rich, and his own account of it is so good and so lucidly and cogently written, except for a few purple passages, that a reviewer can only lay down his arms and say: read the book, for one cannot possibly do it justice within the confines of a review. The vignettes alone are worth the price of admission: Russell as a boy trapped as the only "man" at the table when the ladies left the room, alone, in utter terror, with Mr. Gladstone, and the great man saying only, "This is very good port they have given me, but why have they given it to me in a claret glass"; or conversational gambits, such as the one from his maternal grandmother, who was of the eighteenth century, rationalistic and witty, and who pooh-poohed Victorian prudery; "Nobody can say anything against *me*, but I shall always say that it is not so bad to break the 7th commandment as the 6th, because at any rate it requires the consent of the other party."

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Some great men seek power, fame and money, but Russell sees his life as dominated by three urges or longings or concerns: for love, for knowledge and "an unbearable pity for the suffering of mankind". In all three realms he has been active, to put it mildly.

With women he could be on occasion a bounder, at least so it appears. The first volume takes him up through his first marriage (there are to be four in all) with Alys Smith, sister of Logan Pearsall, its break-up and a couple of love affairs, most notably with the ubiquitous Ottoline Morrell. The woman he seems most to have admired — this was platonic — was Beatrice Webb, who once wrote to him (it is statements like these that have made the English a great race):

> I have always admired your very great intelligence, and tho' I have sometimes had my doubts about the strength of your character, I have always felt its peculiar charm.

Russell behaved very badly, as he admits, with the daughter of an American gynecologist, and there were probably others. The love affair with Ottoline is not without its moments of hilarity. Although friendly with many Americans, Russell intensely dislikes America, more, it would seem, than is necessary, although he has his reasons, past and present. So all Americans will be proud to know that it was an American dentist who cured Russell of his pyorrhea just when his "bad breath" was about to end his love affair with the fastidious Ottoline. They came together again, fragrantly.

His greatest intellectual passion in his early life was mathematics, first conceived at the age of eleven when he learned Euclid and culminating at thirty-eight when he completed the *Principia Mathematica* with Whitehead. The turning point in his intellectual life occurred in 1900 at the International Congress of Philosophy in Paris where he met Peano and became acquainted with Peano's "mathematical logic." Whitehead and Russell, with Russell doing most of the day by day work, labored over the *Principia* for ten years. These were among the most unhappy in his life. People who do not engage in abstract thought (and I do not) often fail to realize what agony it must be to wander about in this strange realm utterly divorced from commonsensical reality, where either the ideas will not come or when they come they are conventional or mistaken or they lead to mistakes, which then means backing up and starting all over again. Only the myth of Sisyphus or the analogy of the wounded man crawling through a minefield suggests the labor, the terrors, the loneliness and the monotony. Russell himself says that his "intellect never quite recovered from the strain" of this book.

On philosophy in general: "On the whole a rather hopeless busi-

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ness." "If only one lived in the days of Spinoza, when systems were still possible . . ." (Letter to Gilbert Murray, 1902). To Lowes Dickinson, who was visiting the Orient, he wrote in 1913: "But intellect, except at white heat, is very apt to be trivial." Still through it all, and to this day, there persists the great faith in reason and its powers, and in that same letter to Dickinson he said:

> Are you finding the Great Secret in the East? I doubt it. There is none — there is not even an enigma. There is science and sober daylight and the business of the day — the rest is mere phantoms of the mind.

And when Russell had his shortlived and turaultuous encounter with D. H. Lawrence during the war (which should appear in the next volume), John Stuart Mill would have seen that the seminal antithesis between Bentham and Coleridge which he pointed out in two celebrated essays was being enacted all over again, in an exaggerated, not to say outrageous, fashion in the twentieth century by Lawrence and Russell. For example, in the next to last paragraph in the last letter to Russell in *D. H. Lawrence's Letters to Bertrand Russell* occurs the sentence, "Nothing is born by taking thought."

It is hard to name a crucial social cause in modern times that has not had Russell's name associated with it. He began by helping to bring to final fruition — we hope — the kinds of things that Mill, most potently, had fought for: legalized birth control, women's rights, women's suffrage, freedom of speech, freedom of conduct, educational reform and so on. And he is ending with the problems of the cold war, the H-bomb and, presently, Vietnam. And in that "world conscience" that condemns the American intervention in Vietnam and what is probably the most unsavory war that America has ever engaged in Russell's voice is undoubtedly one of the most important. This is not always a matter of what he explicitly says, for along with his great wit and aptness he has always had a real gift for saying preposterous things. As a prophet he is no better than the rest of us, and he can be on occasion as silly as most men. What is important is what he has stood for and done and suffered in his ninety-odd years. But the suffering in this volume is mostly emotional and intellectual. The pains undergone in opposing society are yet to come. There are not many things these days to look forward to: one of the few is the appearance of the next volume of this autobiography.

John Henry Raleigh

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LETTERS

Sirs:

Your readers may recall the exchange between Norman Mailer and myself in the last *Partisan Review* concerning health, physical condition, etc. among Negroes and whites in America. Since my letter was based on a report by Dr. H. Jack Geiger, I thought it might be useful to submit the Howe-Mailer exchange to him and see what he thought. Which I did. Dr. Geiger then wrote me the following letter, asking that it be submitted to *Partisan Review* for publication. Which I do.

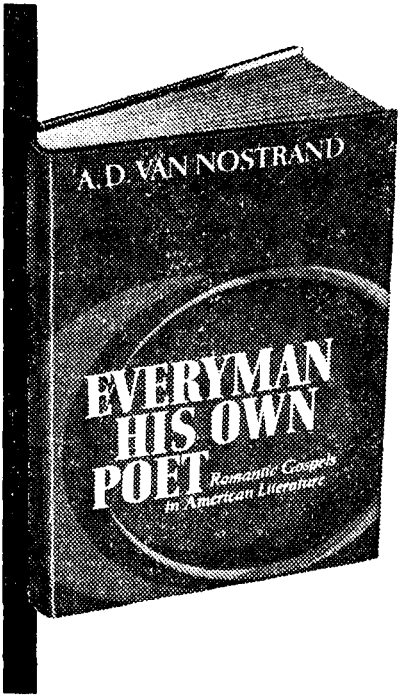
Irving Howe

Dear Mr. Howe:

Your letter of August 5 has just been forwarded to me in Mississippi, where most of my work is now focused. I am pleased at your thoughtfulness in sending me the exchange of correspondence between yourself and Norman Mailer in the *Partisan Review*. I think the issue is a most important one.

First of all, I have to point out an error which occurred either in your letter, or in the Times of May 19. The quote should have said "and in some urban ghettos of the North one child in ten dies in infancy."

With regard to Mr. Mailer's reply, it is inaccurate. I do not want to bore you, or him, or the readers of *Partisan Review*, with a long and statistical analysis, but the fundamental error is in the application to whole populations of the idea that "everytime an infant dies someone else must live to the age of 70 in order to have an average life expectancy for the two of 35



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years." In a sample of two people, life may be divided between 0 years and 70 years to reach an average of 35; but in the large Negro population of the United States it is not 50% that dies under one year of age but only approximately 4% — even though this is a rate 90% higher than the white rate. The fact of the matter is that most but not all of the seven year differential in life expectancy between Negroes and whites in the United States is accounted for by infant mortality. It is worth emphasizing the "not all." While it is quite true, as Mr. Mailer points out, that there has been very little progress for life expectancy beyond age 40 (regardless of race) in the last 50 years, the fact is that at *almost every age* from 0 to 65, including the ages past 40, the Negro has a lower life expectancy in the United States than the white. Put more bluntly, a Negro in the United States at any age is likelier to die sooner than a white man of the same age. The death rates for virtually every major grouping of diseases, at any age, is higher for Negroes than for whites in the United States.

This is obviously in very large measure — if not entirely — due to the circumstances of life for the black American — that is, miserable housing, over crowding, inadequate nutrition, greater exposure to infectious disease, discrimination, social and psychological stress, and all the rest of the dreary litany that is so familiar to us.

It is just not true in the United States that Negroes and whites have equally healthy bodies; at any age, the Negro is likelier to suffer illness — or at least to die from the illnesses he suffers. I do not know what Mr. Mailer means by "the Negroes have become on the average physically superior . . ." What is the criterion of physical superiority? It cannot be in growth and development; inadequate nutrition and faulty medical care have seen to that. It cannot be in life expectancy. The implication is that there is some sort of intrinsic or genetic physical superiority in Negroes, however obscured it may be by the effects of environment and faulty medical care. On the basis of our present knowledge, this is as ridiculous as the contention that Negroes are intrinsically inferior and whites superior. There is just no scientific support for claims of racial superiority and inferiority no matter which race we are talking about.

The most profound admiration for American Negroes — for the ability to survive, somehow, to some extent, in the face of brutalizing, bitter, discriminatory biological, social and physical environment — does not require statistical manipulation nor genetic mythology. It would be tragic if we let anything obscure our confrontation of the slow and systematic damage our social order wreaks on black Americans, just as it would be foolish if we made longevity the test of the quality of a social order. After all, whites in North Dakota live longer than anybody in the United States, and I doubt that Mr. Mailer would be interested in the thesis that rural North Dakota represents the epitome of Western civilization.

Finally, I do not know what Mr. Mailer means by "America's medical civilization." Discrimination and injustice in medical care are a significant and disgusting feature of American life, but the basic harm that is done to blacks in the United States has nothing to do with medi-

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cine; it has to do with the social order of which medicine is only a part.

H. Jack Geiger, M.D.
Tufts University School of Medicine

Mr. Mailer replies:

One point I wished to make in my answer to Irving Howe: With the exception of infant care, our medical civilization (by which I mean techniques, pharmacopia, hospitals, etc.) deprive people of more health than they furnish. Dr. Geiger's letter with its corrected statistics — statistics, mind you, which had to be corrected after passing through three reliable sources, Dr. Geiger, *The New York Times* and Irving Howe — admits that even with the corrected statistics, Negro life expectancy is almost as great as white. The Negro's greater mortality, as Dr. Geiger points out quite justly, is due to leading lives of such abysmal economic misery that Black health is affected. Obviously their slightly greater rate of adult mortality is due not to insufficiency of medical care, but to a lack of the most basic requirements of life, food and shelter. It seems to me that the true test of the argument might be to study Negro communities which have decent food and shelter but not enough income to afford any expensive medical care against prosperous white samples who receive all the medical care in the world. Then we might see whose body was voting for longevity. I do not wish to make a fetish of longevity in and of itself. It was the others, after all, who first brought it up. I would rather point out that my attack was made upon the conditioned reflexes of the liberal stance which rushes to claim that he who does without professional medical care is automatically damned, and damned unhealthy,

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whereas I would rush to assume that one of the roots of the 20th century disease is the over-proliferation of medical techniques and medical drugs without in some — or by now is it in most? — cases rudimentary studies of their ultimate effects.

In none of this have I mentioned once that the physical superiority of the Negro appears most evident in the extraordinary number of Negroes who make superb athletes. Let Irving Howe say that the reason for athletic eminence is because nothing else is open to the talented Negro — I would suggest he watch a few of their moves. The resources of an emerging culture can sometimes be glimpsed in the passage of a figure. (Or is that what modern dance has been trying to tell me all these years?)

Sirs:

The Czech weekly review "Literarni Listy," along with the Polish "Po Prostu" and the Hungarian "Irodalmi Ujsag" of 1956 ranks high among those East European publications which, aiming at reforming socialism after years of debasement and abject servility, restored to the printed word its dignity.

The occupation of Czechoslovakia by the armed forces of the countries of the Warsaw Pact has endangered the existence of the "Literaturni Listy" so that the board of editors has to take the decision of discontinuing the publication of the weekly. A great number of the staff editors and contributors of "LL" were forced to flee the country.

The monthly *Kultura* has decided to award its literary prize amounting F.F. 5.000.-. to the "Literarni Listy."

In doing so it has acted not only in its own name but also in the name of a great many writers in Poland, who prevented from expressing their feeling of solidarity with the Czech weekly and admiration for its attitude, asked *Kultura* to be their spokesman.

The main intention of this gesture is of course to erase, at least in a symbolic way, the shame of the Polish participation in the aggression in Czechoslovakia.

But there is a second aim which would initiate a fund which would enable the "Literarni Listy" to resume its activities, for the time being in exile, until the day it will be possible to publish it in the country where it was born.

Jerzy Giedroyc
Editor, Kultura

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(Continued from Page 502)

ture at Northwestern. . . . **BETTY FALKENBERG** lives in Germany. Mrs. Falkenberg writes frequently for the International Herald Tribune. . . . **THOMAS R. EDWARDS** tells us that he still is teaching at Rutgers and working on his book on poetry and politics. . . . **MAUREEN HOWARD** is teaching at the New School this year and is working on a new novel. . . . **MICHAEL THELWELL** is a SNCC staff member currently on leave. Mr. Thelwell is in the Creative Writing Program at the University of Massachusetts. . . . **ALAN LELCHUK** teaches at Brandeis. He's working on a novel which will be published by Houghton Mifflin, and on a study of George Gissing. . . . **AMITAI ETZIONE's The Active Society** was recently published. Mr. Etzione, who teaches at Columbia, is in Washington this year on a Guggenheim. . . . **JOHN HENRY RALEIGH's Time, Place, and Idea: Essays on the Novel** was just published. Mr. Raleigh is a member of the Berkeley Budget Committee.

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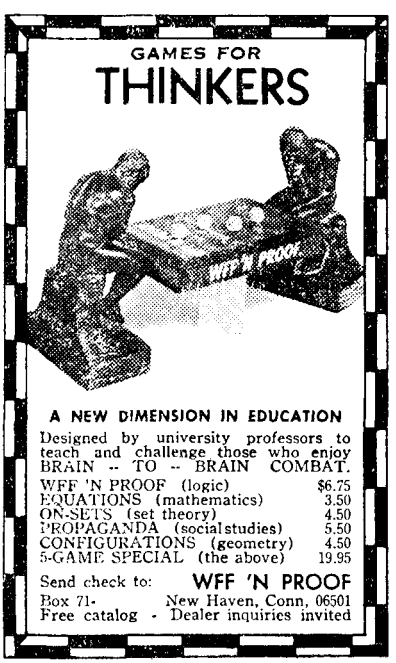
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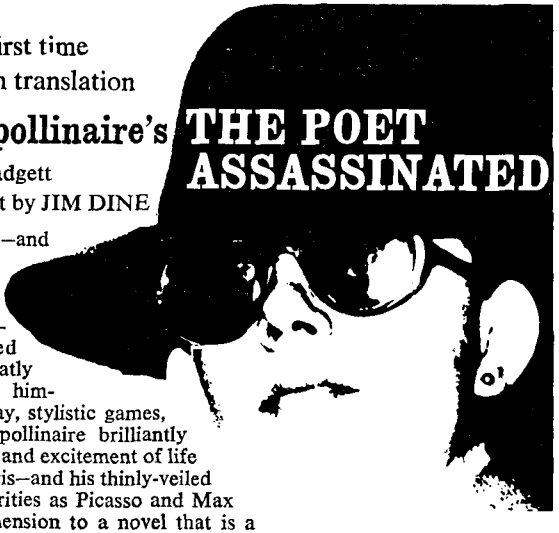

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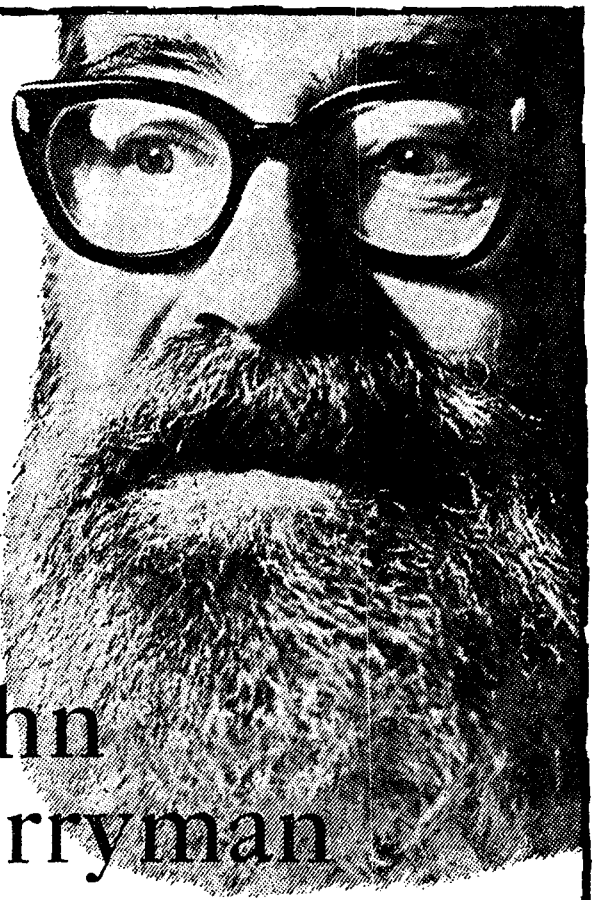

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